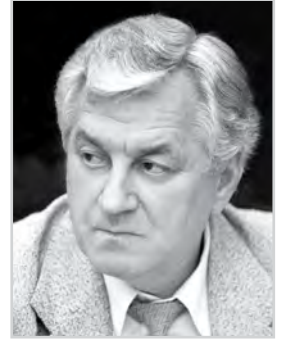


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Spontaneous mass behavior: psychological aspects in the context of social and economic circumstances

Abstract. Mass spontaneous behavior of people is a complex social and psychological phenomenon. There is a reason for the emergence, development and completion of mass actions. Hence, both a purely psychological analysis and a clear recognition that mass psychology is primarily determined by particular social and economic circumstances are of importance. A crisis in society is caused exactly by negative developments in the economy that extremely complicate the socio-economic situation for the vast majority of the population. These complications can be of an objective or subjective character (that is, complications can be relatively local) but they determine the exact psychological state of society. Of all the discrepancies in treating the «mass» concept, most appropriate are those, which substantiate it as a temporary group of people, functional by character but not morphological, dynamic but not static. It arises and operates based on its own internal, not external laws. The Crises in society are caused by negative phenomena in the economy, which dramatically complicate the socio-economic situation for the majority of population. This problem can be both objective and subjective (i.e., complications may be relatively local by nature), but they form the psychological state of society. A misunderstanding of this fact can lead to a nonobjective character of any psychological analysis, which cannot be the basis for practical conclusions.

Keywords: State; Society; Mass Psychology; Spontaneous Behavior; Socio-economic Interests

JEL Classification: Z18; Z19

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Масова стихійна поведінка: психологічні аспекти в контексті соціальних та економічних обставин

Анотація. Масова стихійна поведінка людей є складним соціальним та психологічним феноменом. Поява, розвиток, закінчення масових акцій має свою логіку. При цьому важливим є як суто психологічний аналіз, так і розуміння того, що психологія мас обумовлюється в першу чергу конкретними соціальними та економічними обставинами. Криза в суспільстві обумовлена саме негативними явищами в економіці, що надзвичайно ускладнюють соціально-економічну ситуацію для переважної більшості населення. Це ускладнення може мати об'єктивний чи суб'єктивний характер (тобто ускладнення можуть мати відносно локальний характер), але саме вони обумовлюють психологічний стан суспільства.

Ключові слова: держава; суспільство; психологія мас; стихійна поведінка; соціально-економічні інтереси.

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Массовое стихийное поведение: психологические аспекты в контексте социальных и экономических обстоятельств

Аннотация. Массовое стихийное поведение людей является сложным социальным и психологическим феноменом. Появление, развитие, окончание массовых акций имеет свою логику. При этом важен как чисто психологический анализ, так и понимание того, что психология масс обуславливается в первую очередь конкретными социальными и экономическими обстоятельствами. Кризис в обществе обусловлен именно негативными явлениями в экономике, которые чрезвычайно затрудняют социально-экономическую ситуацию для подавляющего большинства населения. Это осложнение может иметь объективный или субъективный характер (то есть осложнения могут иметь относительно локальный характер), но именно они обуславливают психологическое состояние общества.

Ключевые слова: государство; общество; психология масс; стихийное поведение; социально-экономические интересы.

1. Introduction. Our concern is essentially with the problem of mass, particularly spontaneous, behavior of large groups of people. In this context, the phenomenon of the two Ukrainian Maidans, those of 2004 and 2014, can be both analysed and compared. Hence, both a purely psychological analysis and a clear recognition that mass psychology is primarily determined by particular social and economic circumstances are of importance. The latter requires a separate detailed influence analysis, but first of all it is necessary to realize that psychological peculiarities are mainly determined by the country's socio-economic situation.

2. Brief Literature Review. Firstly, we will point out that the problem of mass behavior of people began to be actively studied only in the latter half of the 19th century. We can distinguish two major scientific schools which developed at that time: a) the German School (psychology of peoples) represented by W. Wundt, M. Lazarus, and H. Steinthal; b) the Franco-Italian School (mass psychology) represented by G. Le Bon, G. Tarde, V. Pareto, and S. Sighele. Those schools are quite famous and analysed.

In Russia, there were M. Mikhailovsky's subjective psychology, V. Bekhterev's collective reflexology, A. Chizhevsky's helio-psychology, other scientific trends and views. They are also well-known.

In the «Soviet» era, the problem of mass behavior was virtually more denied than examined. Mass popular actions were also strictly secret, although they were, as it is known, by no means rare. Some hidden features of interest towards this problem appeared only in the late 60s of the 20th century. At that time, unlike the present days, the socio-economic aspects of mass behavior were overemphasised.

3. Purpose. In the 21st century, mass manifestations, actions of large groups of people compelled scholars to study this phenomenon too meticulously. Ukrainian society constitutes no exception in this respect, since mass spontaneous behavior has become almost a commonplace phenomenon rather than an exception. Let us remember the numerous so-called color revolutions in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and in many other countries worldwide. Why? Political scientists, sociologists, psychologists, economists, representatives of various fields and, first of all social knowledge, wonder what are the nature, consequences, threats or positive aspects of this phenomenon. We will try to find answers to such questions.

4. Results. To begin with, it should be defined what the mass or the crowd is. Only then we will be able to discuss mass psychology, mass behavior determined by socio-economic circumstances and the «struggle» against them in detail.

For all differences in explanations of the notion of «mass», those who substantiate it as a temporarily existing group of people, functional and not morphological, dynamic and non-static, are the most accurate. It emerges and functions based on its own internal rather than external regularities. Moreover, *the mass* is a category of an unstable, crisis-hit society. At the same time, one fundamental thesis – there is a crisis in society is caused exactly by negative developments in the economy, which extremely complicate the socio-economic situation for the vast majority of the population. These complications can be of an objective or subjective character, but they determine the exact psychological state of society. We would like to emphasize that without understanding of this fact any analysis of mass psychology cannot be reasonably objective and serve as a basis for practical conclusions.

The mass is based on mass consciousness as a coincidence at a given instant (combination or conjunction) of the key components (which are largely conditioned by multifaceted social and economic circumstances) of consciousness of a large number of people representing various groups, classes of society but not confining to them [7, 366-367]. The mass, as S. Freud put it, is impulsive, changeable, and irritable. It is controlled almost exclusively by the unconscious [Ibidem, 367].

As psychologists define it, «the crowd represents a quantity of people unrelated by common goals and uniform role and position organization but united by a common focus of attention, the emotional state relationship and somewhat manifested mass consciousness» [9, 332].

Since the notions of *mass* and *crowd* are similar, the definition of the notion «crowd» by Ukrainian psychologist and political scientist O. M. Vergun is rather expressive: «A crowd is a cultureless gathering of people who do not have a clearly realized common faith but are interrelated by similarity of the emotional state and a common object of attention» [2, 15]. Considering the Ukrainian Maidans of 2004 and 2014, it is not hard to notice that they are essentially different. In 2004, the common faith and general emotional state in the participants of Maidan were much more noticeable than in 2014, while the common object of struggle was the same in both cases – authorities. Not wishing to be offensive to anyone, we can state that the second Maidan in Kyiv (2014) may be termed «crowd», especially at the outset of its emergence.

One may also speak of the mass or the crowd in another respect – as of a specific political game, which is, in its turn, determined by differently directed (tactically or strategically) economic interests of influential groups of the economic and political elites. It can be an authentic political game, a conventional political game and a political quasi-game. These are essentially different kinds of the political game having a direct bearing on civil society or, more precisely, a form of manifestation of such society, whose state is dictated by the socio-economic situation.

An authentic political game means self-organized activities of a politician, a citizen, a group, and a large number of people. It is natural, objectively determined, first of all by economic interests. A politician's conventional game represents a game according to certain established rules – constitutional and legal, social, financial and economic. A politician's quasi-game is, to put it simply, playing politics, when the latter is a cover for serving economic interests of both an individual politician and an elite group he/she represents. Juggling acts, manipulations, provocations, intrigues and other utterly undemocratic, uncivilized principles, practices and methods are inherent in it. The mass rally is a political game. This is a special and individual aspect of political management determined by economic interests.

The mass and the crowd have much in common as gathering of rather different people, including the level of culture consciousness. Yet, as E. Canetti, G. Le Bon, S. Freud emphasized that even a cultured person can be a barbarian being in the crowd. Ukrainian political scientists V. Rebko, V. Bebyk, & A. Poichenko write: «He is beginning, to be prone to arbitrariness, disorderly conduct, fury, and also to enthusiasm and heroism peculiar to a primitive man» [12, 85].

Now, we will identify the key features of mass psychology as a complex and dynamic, not only social but also in a certain way economic phenomenon.

Mass spontaneous behavior is most often a response to instability, shortcomings, political and socioeconomic crises. The presence and dominance of irrational, instinctive over pragmatic, conscious feelings are largely characteristic of such a response.

The mass, a large gathering of people, needs a rather neat, intelligible plan of actions, leadership (an individual or an authoritative group) and, properly speaking, actions themselves. Otherwise, the mass lacks unity, self-restraint and civilized activity. Practice has proven that there is not and actually will not be a desired result expected by both an individual and the entire mass. On the contrary, spontaneous, situational leadership of the mass and, especially, the presence of provocative gathering participants can entail rather unpredictable actions, responsibility for which nobody most often assumes afterwards. Such a situation, in particular, occurred in the Ukrainian Maidan on 19 January 2014, when on the day of Epiphany there developed clashes between the power-wielding agents and the participants of Maidan. And only at the last moment they managed to avoid dire consequences, aside from a few tens of people who received various wounds. Unfortunately, later people also died...

Anonymity, unconsciousness, sense of impunity, and irresponsibility are the main features in the mass advantageous for an individual. «I behave as all other people do» – such is the formula that appears to be a huge threat to human individuality, both morally and physically.

As previously noted, mass or crowd psychology may mean that an individual loses his own individuality, composure in the mass, acts «as other people», mainly impulsively and thoughtlessly. Even naturally easy-tempered, well-balanced, well-bred people resort in the course of mass events to act that by no means are typical for them in a peaceful state.

In this regard, E. Canetti, a renowned psychologist, made an interesting observation over the phenomenon of «the mass». In his work known as «Crowds and Power» he wrote: «... the urge to grow is the first and supreme attribute of the crowd. It wants to seize everyone within reach... The natural crowd is the open crowd; there are no limits whatever to its growth; it does not recognize houses, doors or locks and those who shut themselves in are suspect. The open crowd exists so long as it grows; it disintegrates as soon as it stops growing» [4, 185].

It is also important to state that in most cases the mass does not seek the truth at all; it obeys words and calls; it almost unquestioningly credits leaders, sometimes even hollow-hearted, who are guided by their own or elite group economic interests but have a great command of language and are able to influence the mass. G. Le Bon wrote about it in his widely known work «The Psychology of Peoples» [6, 171-172].

Due to insufficient consciousness, culture, loss of traditional values, social bearings, estrangement, marginal elements of society and those who have experienced the socio-economic crisis are the most prone to participate in mass movements and protests. This is a very favorable situation for all those who in every way speculate on popular protest to protect their economic interests. That is to say, the mass, crowd activity seems to be orderly, well-thought-out only from the side. It is most often controlled by those people and forces who strive at whatever cost to use such activity in their own economic interests. That is what relevant politicians and political forces do using masses only up to a proper time, situation, which ends with serving their own basic economic interests (including obtaining of necessary power-wielding tools for this purpose) and achievement of their goals. After that, they do not need the masses, which become even out of place.

The mass is very sensitive to the stand, behavior of authorities, political leaders, their own leaders. For example, on 17 January 2014 near a subway station in the city of Kyiv young people distributed a simple leaflet containing, in addition to the general call, an appeal to join the Civic Platform «Maidan». It read as follows: «Maidan is freedom! Maidan is Ukraine! But Maidan has just been cheated twice. First, we credited authorities that promised to bring us to Europe – and we got bloodshed. Then, we credited the opposition leaders, who promised to force authorities to punish the guilty persons, but instead of this they only prepare for new elections and carve up posts». That was, in our opinion, an exact a diagnosis, characterized

the psycho-political state of many people participating in the Maidan movement.

Mass protests are marked by different kinds of aggression, which just determine the behavior pattern of the protesters themselves. Direct aggression is an ultimate form of aggression in the course of mass disturbances, i.e., when it is of a conscious and planned nature and its aim is not concealed. Such aggression carries the greatest threat first of all for human health and life. It takes place during the maximum exacerbation of relations between the conflicting parties.

In order to force the mass to act in a way somebody else wants, it is important to trigger and accelerate to the maximum the mechanism of collective irresponsibility within the mass. In his time, A. Hitler greatly succeeded in it, who assumed full responsibility and made a large number of people unconditionally trust him believing that «the Fuehrer knows what to do», «the Fuehrer will resolve all problems», «the Fuehrer will lead us to victory» and so on [14, 25]. Not only one person but also a group of persons, a political party, etc. can convince the mass of it. It is done based on and by means of technologies of psychological influence (brainwashing of the mass) and quite often by way of primitive manipulations, juggling acts if not simple lies, using demagogic slogans to cover up the economic interests of elites. Exploitation of human passions underlies massive manipulations, including political ones. La Rochefoucauld wrote: «The passions are the only orators' arguments that always persuade» [5, 28]. You have noticed that emotions and passions are never so much used, played up in appearances and speeches as before large audiences. There, rhetoric rather than arguments or logic has advantages and drives to success in the first instance.

Let us turn our attention to the following fact of a fundamental nature. Mass spontaneous manifestations, movements, gatherings are by no means always assessed positively. More importantly, an uncivilized, undemocratic, extra-legal struggle of the majority for power, for its vital socioeconomic interests even with vigorous democratic calls and slogans can create a situation where a brutal and wholly unnecessary tyranny of majority over the minority is being actually formed, of what renowned English philosopher, logician, sociologist, political and public figure Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) warned.

The mass listens mainly to whom it desires to hear; trying to convince it of something is of no effect. Therefore, skilled politicians, covering up their own economic interests with rhetoric, either shape some point of view, a «general» opinion of the mass first, or, before appealing to it, study such an opinion beforehand. That is to say, follow the mass, its orientations and desires. A situation comes about quite often where the mass «breaks» from its leaders and continues to intuitively live on its own, including actions that objectively are not beneficial to its vital socioeconomic interests. This is the most threatening situation.

The issue of leadership in the mass is challenging. In G. Tarde's judgment, the mass finds itself a leader as if pushing him / her out of itself. G. Le Bon, in his turn, described four basic types of mass leaders: a) the «Apostle» (a persuasive preacher, messiah); b) the «casual bigot»; c) the «degenerate-outsider» (advocates of doctrines promising a better future to people, since their inherited vices preclude them from being high in the social scale); d) the «dictator» (he who captures the mass when it spontaneously formed) [7, 386-388]. It is not unexpected that the role of any leader («a crowd leader» according to G. Tarde) is to create a faith. Therefore, the role of a leader is particularly crucial [11, 196].

Further, we will discuss the nature of relationships between the crowd and authorities, as well as psychological, political and other aspects of their struggle. The most popular and effective means of the struggle of the crowd (or, as a rule, of certain elite financial and economic groups that control it) against authorities (and vice versa) are in street clashes. They consist of provocations on both sides in order to maximally exacerbate the situation. People are expressly persuaded, recruited and hired (most often for a fee rather than only for ideological reasons and on political grounds) to subsequently commit acts qualified afterwards at the discretion of one party and in favor of the side, which resorted to it. The notorious «titushky» (i. e. contracted thugs) during the 2014 Maidan are only a phenomenon that, as the saying

runs, lies on the surface. The system of forces is rather wide and includes even mobilization through computer networks. Unfortunately, this is neither legally assessed nor controlled.

The crowd exists and lives based in certain sentiments, which are determined primarily by the country's general socioeconomic situation. Psychological sentiments of the crowd are volatile and unstable. They condition the state and actions of the crowd under different circumstances. At that, it should be remembered that the crowd is heterogeneous (socially and economically) and may include socially dangerous elements requiring neutralisation. Then, the existence of relevant power-wielding agencies engaged in such neutralisation is logical. Such agencies, however, are the same as society is. A. M. Bandurka and V. A. Druz rightly note that «the functional activity of the Ministry of Internal Affairs designed for settlement of conflict situations represents a projective reflection of structural organisation of society» [1, 99]. Thus, it is illogical in Ukraine to have grievances against the militia and riot police forces such units as «Berkut» and the like without taking into account what the psychological and socioeconomic state of society and its citizens is. After all, our contemporaries and fellow citizens rather than some aliens serve in these agencies and direct them.

Ideally, the government and government agencies cannot operate (exist) anywhere without using force or violence. At least, that is because societies include a fair number of people who owing to a low level of consciousness and culture (which is due primarily to their difficult socioeconomic situation) violate legislative, legal rules, which are, in the meantime, universally binding. In the final analysis, genuine democracy is only possible when society has maximum rational, sound laws in the interests of everyone that meet the socioeconomic needs of the majority. The entire human community should strictly observe these laws. To observe consciously but not under constraint. «Nonviolence is the weapon of the strong», the great humanist Mahatma Gandhi wrote. It will follow as a logical consequence that the more the mass, the more numerous and reinforced the power-wielding agencies (the army, the police, special service units, prisons and so on) are, the weaker, more imperfect and undemocratic the government is. Sadly enough, but such agencies grow year after year in sovereign Ukraine, which by no means evidences perfection, the democratic nature of the government and the democratic character of the social process on the whole.

However, it is expedient here to point out the following: the state cannot fully do without coercion and even violence. The outstanding Russian anarchist M. A. Bakunin (1814-1876) noted that if there is a state, there is certainly a rule and, hence, slavery too; a state without slavery, open or disguised, is impossible. It is understandable that such a thesis is characteristic of all thinkers who deny the existence of the state in general. We agree, however, that it is of no use to seek a perfect democracy now. Even societies where, aside from a high level of socioeconomic development, exists high spiritual culture, tolerance, integrity of panhuman interests, cannot simply exist in their «pure» form. It is a fact of the early 21st century.

The government and any rule in a state is not finally viable when it is supported by force but it is viable if based on certain specific feelings and sentiments of masses that are determined by their socioeconomic status. If, however, the government disregards such feelings and sentiments it has no prospects not only with regard to its legitimisation but also concerning its existence in general.

If coercion, including in the state's activities, can hardly ever be renounced, the question arises as to what should be forbidden, given that only those aspects that are not democratic, humane should be put under a ban. Essentially, this is something that violates rights and freedoms, threatens people's lives, etc. For example, nobody forbids anyone in Ukraine to practice any given religion. However, in this particular case too an individual's preference for a certain religion must not «prevent» another individual belonging to another denomination from believing. It is not that simple to regulate this kind of things in the state.

Meanwhile, many governments in the world have proved that in the 21st century mere governmental or state efforts do not suffice to meet the interests and socioeconomic needs of society – it is necessary for people to develop their initiative

themselves. It is essential to clearly state that it is a fool's errand to develop a highly effective society without self-governing people's efforts in all spheres of life. That is, delegation of a considerable part of powers to the people and the majority is not a formal principle of democracy but an indispensable function of the state. This is an objective, natural condition for social progress in the age of transition to postindustrial, information societies. The government cannot self-actualize by simply understanding the people's opinion; it should accurately consider such an opinion in the course of its operation.

If there arises a confrontation between the authorities and the people, one should then seriously reflect on how to get out of such a situation without any serious consequences for people, since authorities are bodies that should serve personality and society as a whole, and take maximum care of them.

There are several options for rendering impossible a massive protest as a conflict between the people and the authorities. The most civilized and effective of them consists in the negotiation process (including, first of all, socioeconomic issues), when in the course of the dialog the parties reach an acceptable decision. Also there are the following ways. Firstly, a massive protest gradually subsides, its effective potential diminishes, and it disintegrates by itself because of people's tiredness, uncertainty over the plan of actions, the absence of authoritative leadership and so on. Having such an option, it is too hard to rouse the mass to struggle once more – it requires an extremely weighty pretext, arguments. Secondly, tough demonstrations crackdown. If, in so doing, government agencies at least somehow overstep their authority alleging that it does not matter, no harm is done. Even judicial proceedings concerning such overstepping afterwards, later, will no longer lead to a necessary psychological explosion needed for mass disturbances. As the saying goes, the ship has sailed... In any case, massive protests and disturbances are always time-constrained, therefore the confronting parties try to act dynamically and resolutely to the extent possible. The authorities and power-wielding agencies hurry up to postpone the process as much as possible, while the masses hurry up to accelerate the situation in different ways. Few of them are concerned with what will happen next, except the fate of the participants of the confrontation on all sides. Those who violate human rights to social protest and act in a by no means civilized way, outside of law, undemocratically during a protest argue that the history may judge them. Unfortunately, few people care about the loss of health, ruined destinies, social disappointment in truth and justice, responsibility of society and authorities in the course of the struggle itself. The real essence of an event becomes clear and known only down the years, if not centuries. The status of relationships between protesters and go-

vernmental special units such as «Berkut», «Alfa», «Bars» and so forth in Ukraine is complicated by the fact that in appropriate situations special units are instructed to use rubber truncheons, gas and flash bang grenades, pepper-spray balls, pump-action shotguns firing rubber bullets, water cannons and other means. For their part, protesters also use primitive but life-threatening means ranging from ordinary stones and canes to axes or even more dangerous means. Finally, as it was during the 2014 Maidan in the city of Kyiv, there were dozens of wounded and injured on both sides. However, nobody takes into consideration psychological injuries of people.

There is one more option for settlement of a mass conflict, which is used fairly often. To calm the mass, it is necessary to somewhat «let off the pressure». Virtually all parties to a confrontation conflict often resort to it. Thus, certain changes, leadership reshuffle are carried out within the bodies of government giving rise to grievances. This is done in order to avoid resignation of top public officials. As a rule, procedures for resignation of such persons are always legally prescribed in a vague manner: it is impossible to understand for what reasons and what the mechanism for resignation of state leaders is. Generally, there are always immediate appeals to the highest judicial bodies of the state, whose independence from the authorities is often out of the question.

Conclusion. Of course, it would be of paramount importance for everyone to do everything in order to merely exclude mass social and political actions, disturbances, protests from the life of societies. However, the reality shows that it is simply impossible. There are no such societies or socioeconomic systems. They differ in the way and extent in and to which both the state and citizens themselves exercise social protection of people. This is not to say, however, that there are no sufficiently effective systems securing the vital interests of the population both socially and economically and in terms of ensuring free development of society in the interests of all groups that constitute it. Our opinion is that the Canadian experience could become an important example for Ukraine. I. S. Bakhov clarified that from the 1970s the government of Canada has in a consistent manner shaped a multicultural society, which has effectively and efficiently protected the interests of various sections of the population constituting it [15, 1450-1454]. The same author demonstrated how fruitful dialog of cultures in the interest of stable development was built up in this society created through the government's efforts [16, 106-109]. There is no doubt that such approaches also largely determine sustainable growth of the Canadian economy, which, in its turn, shapes the psychological state of the population forming the basis of stability in the state and society.

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Received 8.11.2015

Стаття надійшла до редакції 8.11.2015