

АКТУАЛЬНІ ПИТАННЯ СОЦІОЛОГІЇ

УДК 316.4.

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THE CONCEPT OF “AGENT OF INFLUENCE”: NORMATIVE AND SOCIO-ANALYTICAL ASPECT (TO THE PROBLEM STATEMENT)

The article gives a descriptive characteristic of the ratio of normative and socio-analytical components of the concept definition of «agent of influence», which is achieved through a review of the characteristics of normative definitions of the concept of «agent of influence».

Based on the review and generalization, it is concluded that agents of influence can be differentiated by the criteria of scale of influence, time perspective of the impact on society (long-term / short-term) and most importantly, the level of influence on society. It is stated that at higher levels of influence, which are religious, scientific, philosophical, artistic, the scale of influence of one society on another society is greater, the time perspective of influence is long-term, social consequences (constructive and destructive) are more significant. It is noted that the agents of influence at these levels are artists, clergy, philosophers and scientists. Their connection with foreign countries is often not direct but indirect, and is manifested in the discourses, texts and meanings that these actors promote in the information space of the society being influenced. However, the consequence of such influence is a deep enculturation of the society-object of influence.

It is noted that middle-level agents are media actors, including journalists, popular bloggers, opinion leaders in the media and social networks. Their purpose as agents of influence is to form public opinion, popularize certain ideological doctrines, cultural and artistic projects, philosophical worldviews and scientific ideas. The consequences of external influences on their part are quickly achievable. However, the long-term consolidation of these consequences may be insignificant, especially in the context of a pluralistic information field and the invasion of global media networks. It is noted that agents of lower (direct) influence are agents who influence the direct decision-making of state bodies (parliaments, executive bodies), which include politicians, civil servants, governmental and non-governmental experts.

In the end, it is concluded that for sociology, the first and the second, and to a lesser extent, the third groups, can be considered promising ones for research. This follows from the fact that for states that exercise external influence, long-term consequences in culture, social institutions, relations of social groups, social macro-processes are significant. It is noted that lower-level agents begin to initiate such changes. Then, given the stability of the social order, the facts of their infiltration are quickly revealed, which becomes a reason for exposure and further persecution.

Key words: *agent of influence, external influence, normative definitions, socio-analytical definitions, conspiratorial definitions of agency of influence, media and sociological definitions of agency of influence.*

Relevance of the topic. The external influence of one state on another involves the infiltration into the information space of a society of various agents of influence. The very concept of «agent of influence» appeared in the political and legal lexicon of the last century. However, its use in sociological discourse is not common. This unusualness is related to the formalization of the concept itself, and on the other hand, to the political and legal consequences of identifying an individual and a legal entity as an agent of influence.

Of course, sociology cannot be satisfied by the criteria of agency of influence, which are relevant to the work of the relevant special services and the availability of foreign sources of funding. To supplement the sociological thesaurus, the concept of «agent of influence» must be further interpreted in order to adapt it to sociological thinking. At the same time, of course, both components of social facts and legislative criteria must be taken into account. The above mentioned determines the relevance of the topic of this article.

The purpose and objectives of the study. The aim of the article is to build a descriptive characteristic of the ratio of normative and socio-analytical components of the definition of the concept of «agent of influence». The objectives of the article are: a) to review the normative definitions' characteristics of the concept of «agent of influence»; b) generalize socio-analytical definitions' characteristics of the concept of «agent of influence».

Analysis of previous research on the selected topic. Definitions of the concept of «agent of influence» in their diversity can be divided into two major groups: normative and socio-analytical [1-8]. Normative definitions are presented in normative legal acts of states. In these definitions, the emphasis is shifted to the procedures of registration, identification, identification of income sources, legal liability for violations of administrative and criminal law.

For example, in the United States, the legal regulation of foreign agents is carried out as part of their mandatory registration. The relevant Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) was adopted in 1938. According to this law, a foreign agent of influence is defined as a natural or legal person who acts on his own behalf or uses a representative office and acts under the control of a foreign manager or whose activities provide control to individuals through whom these actors are financed or subsidized [2].

If an agent of foreign influence has a foreign management or manager, it refers to such actors as foreign governments, foreign political parties, associations, corporations, organizations or «associations of persons» that were either created in accordance with the legislation of a foreign state, or who are residents of other countries. The law also applies to individuals who have foreign citizenship and reside outside the United States. Thus, agents of foreign influence under this law may be foreign government agencies, political organizations, enterprises, non-profit organizations, state enterprises and individuals [2].

This law became an instrument of counteraction to the Nazi propaganda machine in the United States before the Second World War, which was accompanied by various mass actions under the slogan of enlightening the activities of foreign agents to neutralize their pernicious propaganda influence. The law has been amended ten times over its entire period of application [2].

The law now requires foreign agents to submit financial statements and disclose their activities. Failure to comply with these conditions becomes a reason to initiate a criminal case. Such a violation occurs in the absence of registration of the agent of

foreign influence and submission of inaccurate registration data [2]. Sanctions for such violations include imprisonment for up to five years and a fine of up to \$ 10,000. The law does not restrict the activities and extend its jurisdiction to scientific, cultural, educational, and religious organizations. The U.S. Department of Justice's Registry is responsible for overseeing compliance with the law. The predominant implementation of the law was carried out on a voluntary basis. However, over the past 20 years, the number of proceedings has increased significantly [2].

Australian law includes the so-called Foreign Influence Transparency Program. This normative act opens opportunities for monitoring foreign influence in the field of Australian public policy. The law provides for the writing of custom publications by Australian public policy actors (deputies, administrators), even if such publications are financed by foreign political entities (governments, political parties, etc.) [2].

The transparency program defines any person who acts independently or through a representative office and carries out his activities to influence policy / government on behalf of a foreign principal as an agent of foreign influence. The law defines registration obligations for individuals and legal entities – agents of foreign influence [2].

The peculiarities of registration depend on the subjectivity of the foreign principal, the format and objectives of his activities and the characteristics of the entity acting on behalf of the foreign actor. It is the responsibility of agents of foreign influence to inform the registration authorities of their relations with foreign governments or foreign organizations, as well as of the activities' content they carry out on their behalf.

The law provides for the partial posting of such information in a public register in order to clearly represent the decision-makers on the content and extent of foreign influence in Australia. Varieties required for registration by foreign agents are parliamentary lobbying, general lobbying, mass communication and financial activities.

The registration cycle lasts one year, after which the activity of a foreign agent involves re-registration. If there is no registration within a year, it is automatically completed. Deregistration occurs in case of a missed deadline or damage to the resources for storing information about foreign agents, punishable by three years in prison [2].

In Russia, the law on foreign agents was passed in 2012, which was preceded by anti-government protests. Initially, the regulatory jurisdiction of the law concerned political organizations, but later in 2017 its effect was extended to media actors. Even with a non-profit profile, their direct registration in Russia is not possible. Foreign non-profit organizations should act in the form of a partnership, agency or operator, through branches, representative offices and branches or through the creation of a Russian non-profit organization [2].

Foreign agents must comply with the relevant reporting and registration requirements, such as: passing an annual audit at their own expense; informing the Ministry of Justice activities and management for six months; providing regular reporting on

cash expenditures from foreign sources; publication of data in open access on special platforms monitored by state law enforcement agencies [2].

The law establishes the legal possibility of conducting an unlimited number of unscheduled prosecutorial inspections of foreign agents with the requirements of providing any documents, which is possible both on their own initiative and on the complaint of a citizen of the Russian Federation. Sanctions in case of violation of registration requirements established by law are an administrative fine (from 3 thousand rubles to 500 thousand rubles) and imprisonment for a term of two years. Additional measures to restrict the activities of foreign agents may be temporary suspension or forced liquidation [2].

In 2016, Israel passed a law on the transparency of funding for non-governmental organizations. This law stipulates the requirement for foreign agents of influence to be required to provide information on the source and target base of financial flows and public disclosure of the data itself. The data must be published in the media or on social networks in situations where more than half of the financial income is received from foreign residents. There is an administrative fine for violating the law [2].

A similar law was passed in Hungary in 2017. According to the regulations, if the organization has an annual income of more than 24 thousand euros, there is a requirement for mandatory registration as having a foreign residence. In case of violation of this rule, the activities of the organization can be completely blocked [2].

In Egypt, there is a law in force, adopted in 2002, the jurisdiction of which extends to the activities of non-governmental associations and foundations. Funding from any source without the permission of the Ministry of Solidarity and Social Justice is prohibited. In the absence of a permit, there is a sanction of up to six months in prison and a fine of 2,000 Egyptian pounds (about € 118). Also in 2019, Egypt passed a law regulating the activities of non-governmental organizations, which provides for quantitative restrictions on the establishment of non-governmental organizations for foreign nationals residing in Egypt. The number of such citizens should not exceed $\frac{1}{4}$ of the total number of members or management of the organization [2].

In Ukraine, the activities of foreign agents can be considered unregulated. In 2013, the relevant bill was initiated by the Party of Regions. Its content was reduced to the fact that all public organizations with foreign sources of funding were recognized as foreign agents and had to pay income tax. In 2014, the bill was repealed by the Verkhovna Rada, and the situation of legislative vacuum in this area lasted until 2018. In 2018, the promotion of the law was initiated by the «People's Front» faction [2].

This year the Verkhovna Rada registered a bill on the openness of information on the activities of charitable organizations and public associations that receive funding from foreign states and foreign non-governmental organizations. However, the legislative settlement remained in place, as in 2019 the project was withdrawn and its further progress was slowed down [2].

Analytical definitions include conspiracy theories, media and sociological definitions.

According to the conspiracy definition, agents of influence are persons who openly or covertly publicize and promote the interests of any society, including the Soviet one. In the same definitions, work on special services is an essential feature of an agent of influence, with an emphasis on the fact that recruitment for such work takes place at an early age, and professional origin is not significant [2].

Conspiracy theories link agents of influence to any public sphere of activity (government, business, science, media resources, etc.) and capture the vertical mobility of such people through intelligence services. The motivation of agents of influence is also partially represented in the conspiracy definitions. It may relate to ideological commitment, power interests or economic reward [7].

F. Cooks talks about Arne Treholt, a former government official from Norway, whose case is representative for understanding the definitions of agents of influence. Treholt was recruited after several years of his political career and government positions. Treholt himself was an active supporter of communism and was committed to the Soviet Union in international negotiations, resulting in his conviction and imprisonment for espionage.

The media and sociological group of definitions captures the ability of influencers to achieve appropriate results in the field of influence. It is, therefore, about their influence and awareness of the relevant consequences of the impact, in particular on misinformation or the transfer of the relevant secret data. Although in this aspect the scale of influence is more important, which depends on the access of influencers to certain target audiences. This influence is ensured by the social credit of the agents of influence and the preservation of the secrecy of the intentions of influence.

The agent of influence must be credit to a certain audience in a certain socio-cultural, scientific, media, economic and political environment. The level of trust in him depends on his personal prestige and respectability, which are recognized in the group. Given the scale of the audience, the agent of influence has the opportunity to build the latter on the basis of agreement with its leadership [5].

To increase the influence, the agent of influence can resort to the purposeful creation of information forgeries and presenting sources of false information as true. Influence involves the creation of entire networks of misinformation with their own performers and arrangers, who maintain the secrecy of the influence program [5].

In media and sociological definitions, the agency of influence follows from the use of the agent's own social status in order to influence public opinion or make useful political decisions for the customer society. These definitions, however, record a sign of appropriate vertical mobility and work for the relevant intelligence services. These are decisions that open up opportunities for results that are useful to the country whose intelligence service is the agent of influence [8].

In some definitions, this characteristic is significantly expanded by taking into account the signs of achieving the specially set political goals of the society in whose interests the agent of influence exercises its influence.

Latency is an optional feature of the agent of influence in the definitions of the media and sociological group. These are the corresponding antagonisms between different societies and the circumstances in which agents of influence may not be aware of these contradictions, and, nevertheless, act in the interests of a country. In this case, we are talking about the so-called «useful idiots», who without any awareness become agents of influence.

The export of certain groups of influence, personnel cohorts, which created centers of separatism and irredentism in certain regions of the state can also be considered an independent direction of external influence in the context of the above mentioned. Ukrainian researcher V. Rakhmailov identifies 5 components of the profile of separatism in different societies, which can also be used to study agents of influence. These are the determinants of the emergence of separatist movements; social actors-initiators of separatism; the content and direction of the separatist movement; social technologies and scenarios for the deployment of separatist movements; systemic consequences of the separatist movement (movements) for society [3, p. 51-62].

Presenting the main material. The distinction between the concepts of «agent of influence», «lobbyist», «spy» (spy) can be considered the most problematic block in the study of agents of influence. It is a circle of various actors who can consciously or unconsciously act in the interests of the state on the territory of another state. However, their activities can be both related and unrelated to intelligence services.

On the other hand, the very definition of the concept of «agent of external influence» carries, from a sociological point of view, a fundamental social and communication load. Most of the definitions presented in the scientific literature contain two necessary semantic components of «agency of influence», namely: 1) the possibility of influencing public opinion by agents of influence 2) and / or political decision-making.

According to the author of this article, the concept of «agents of external influence» should be interpreted taking into account the broader context of influence, which can be understood not only as work for the secret service or other government agencies or structures and direct implementation of their instructions. The broader context of influence may include:

1) Dissemination within the society's information environment of scientific, philosophical, ideological and other discourses, which in one way or another promote, popularize, glorify a particular ethnic, cultural, national and state identity. Such dissemination can take place through higher education institutions, mass media, cultural, educational and public organizations, various centers, etc. Representatives of intellectual elites, who in most cases have nothing to do with external centers of power, although they are opinion leaders in society, can also be agents of discourse dissemination. Thus, in the Russian Empire before the October coup, the groups of

spreading liberal discourse were representatives of liberal Westernism, which included popular writers, poets, publicists and playwrights. Their intellectual critique of rigidity, obscurantism, bureaucracy, and corruption of the feudal-monarchical way of life was prepared by later terrorist acts of populists and pacifist projects of Marxist-Leninists.

2) Dissemination and promotion of works of art that are created by actors of art of other societies and in one way or another popularize, idealize, position in various angles of benefit the expanding society and / or influence the society in which the relevant promotions are carried out, in a revolutionary, chaotic, shaky way. Thus, in the USSR in the late 80's – early 90's there was a whole direction of anti-Soviet cinema, which created negative portraits of officials, showed odious aspects of life in communist society, its crimes against humanity, torture and suffering, and so on.

3) Creation of specially incultured personnel who become agents of influence after a long stay in the environment of intercultural communication. The production of committed personnel can be considered one of the most productive investments for centers of external influence. In the context of globalization, the creation of sites for inculturation of representatives of one society to another is easier than ever.

After all, scientific-educational and academic mobility is growing, scientists of both socio-humanitarian and natural sciences are given the opportunity to contact communities and institutions of scientific and educational profile of different countries. These states can use situational weaknesses and crises in economies, cultural systems, institutional regulation of neighbors to increase external influence. Thus, in case of Ukraine, this external influence is exercised through transit migrants and students studying abroad and undergoing appropriate inculturation. These are such states as Poland, Hungary, Romania and the Czech Republic.

It does not follow that every transit migrant worker or student inevitably becomes an agent of external influence and begins to literally «work» for another state. However, he becomes more committed to the positive aspects of life in a given society, begins to compare cultural, social, economic and other standards of the neighboring society with the standards of one's own society. The conclusions made by him may not be made in favor of his own society. This means that whole groups of people can become popularizers and promoters of other cultural identities without any «authorization» or «commission». Special student exchange programs were created in the United States, which actively used exchange programs to work with Japanese and South Korean students.

Conclusions. Agents of influence can be differentiated according to the criteria of the scale of influence, the time perspective of the impact consequences on society (long-term / short-term) and, most importantly, the level of influence on society. The higher the influence level of an agent of influence on society, the larger it is and the longer it takes to achieve the consequences of external influence. Conversely, the lower the influence level of an agent of influence on society, the smaller this influence is and the faster the consequences that occur for society as a result of influence. At higher levels of

influence, which are religious, scientific, philosophical, artistic, the scale of influence of one society on another society is greater, the time perspective of influence is long-term, social consequences (constructive and destructive) are more significant.

Agents of influence at these levels are artists, clergy, philosophers and scientists. Their connection with foreign countries is often not direct but indirect, and is manifested in the discourses, texts and meanings that these actors promote in the information space of the society being influenced. However, the consequence of such influence is a deep inculturation of the society-object of influence.

Medium-level agents of influence are media actors, including journalists, popular bloggers, opinion leaders in the media and social networks. Their purpose as agents of influence is to form public opinion, popularize certain ideological doctrines, cultural and artistic projects, philosophical worldviews and scientific ideas. The consequences of external influences on their part are quickly achievable, however, the long-term consolidation of these consequences may be insignificant, especially in the context of a pluralistic information field and the invasion of global media networks.

Agents of lower (direct) influence are agents who influence the direct decision-making of state bodies (parliaments, executive bodies), which include politicians, civil servants, governmental and non-governmental experts. The scale of their impact is the largest, the consequences for society – the object of influence – are the fastest. However, due to their own visibility and easy identification, such agents of influence are directly tracked and can be brought to criminal responsibility.

From the point of view of sociology, the first and second, and to a lesser extent the third groups, can be considered promising ones for research. This follows from the fact that for states that exercise external influence, long-term consequences in culture, social institutions, relations of social groups, social macro-processes are significant. If lower-level agents begin to initiate such changes, then, given the stability of the social order, the facts of their infiltration are quickly revealed, which becomes a reason for exposure and further persecution. Church communities and clergy, philosophers and scientists, opinion leaders from the media sphere affect culture, social communities and institutions more imperceptibly. The fact of their infiltration into society may not be noticed and covered by freedom of thought, which is especially relevant in the Ukrainian context.

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Стаття надійшла до редакції 14.11.2018.

Гугнін Е.А. Концепція «агенту впливу»: нормативний і соціально-аналітичний аспект (до постановки проблеми)

У статті дана описова характеристика співвідношення нормативної та соціально-аналітичної складових поняття визначення “агент впливу”, що досягається шляхом огляду характеристик нормативних визначень поняття “агент впливу”. На основі огляду та узагальнення зроблено висновок, що агенти впливу можна диференціювати за критеріями масштабу впливу, часовою перспективою впливу на суспільство (довгостроковою / короткостроковою) та, що найважливіше, рівнем впливу на суспільство. Зазначається, що на вищих рівнях впливу, які є релігійними, науковими, філософськими, мистецькими, масштаби впливу одного суспільства на інше суспільство більші, часова перспектива впливу – довгострокова, соціальні наслідки (конструктивні та деструктивні) є більш значущими. Зазначається, що агентами впливу на цих рівнях є художники, духовенство, філософи та вчені. Їх зв’язок із зарубіжними країнами часто є не прямим, а опосередкованим і виявляється в дискурсах, текстах та значеннях, які ці суб’єкти просувають в інформаційному просторі суспільства, що зазнає впливу. Однак наслідком такого впливу є глибока інкультурація суспільства-об’єкта впливу. Зазначається, що агенти середнього рівня – це актори засобів масової інформації, зокрема журналісти, популярні блогери, лідери думок у ЗМІ та соціальних мережах. Їх метою як агентів впливу є формування громадської думки, популяризація певних ідеологічних доктрин, культурно-мистецьких проєктів, філософських світоглядів та наукових ідей. Наслідки зовнішнього впливу з їх боку швидко досяжні. Однак довгострокове закріплення цих наслідків може бути незначним, особливо в контексті плюралістичного інформаційного поля та вторгнення у глобальні медіамережі. Зазначається, що агенти нижчого (прямого) впливу – це агенти, які впливають на безпосереднє прийняття рішень державними органами (парламентами, органами виконавчої влади), до яких належать політики, державні службовці, урядові та неурядові експерти. Врешті-решт зроблено висновок, що для соціології першу та другу, і меншою мірою третю групи, можна вважати перспективними для досліджень. Це випливає з того, що для держав, які здійснюють зовнішній вплив, істотними є довгострокові наслідки в культурі, соціальних інститутах, відносинах соціальних груп, соціальних макропроцесах. Відзначається, що агенти нижчого рівня починають ініціювати такі зміни. Потім, враховуючи стабільність соціального порядку, факти їх проникнення швидко виявляються, що стає причиною для викриття та подальшого переслідування.

Ключові слова: агент впливу, зовнішній вплив, нормативні визначення, соціально-аналітичні визначення, конспіративні визначення агентури впливу, медіа та соціологічні визначення агентури впливу.

Гугнин Э.А. Концепция «агент влияния»: нормативный и социально-аналитический аспект (к постановке проблемы)

В статье дается описательная характеристика соотношения нормативной и социоаналитической составляющих определения понятия «агент влияния», которая достигается посредством обзора характеристики нормативных дефиниций концепта «агент влияния». На основании обзора и обобщения сделан вывод, что агентов влияния можно дифференцировать по критериям масштаба влияния, временной перспективе воздействия на общество (долгосрочное / краткосрочное) и, что наиболее важно, по уровню влияния на общество. Утверждается, что на более высоких уровнях влияния, которые являются религиозными, научными, философскими, художественными, масштаб влияния одного общества на другое общество больше, временная перспектива влияния является долгосрочной, социальные последствия (конструктивные и деструктивные) более значительны. Отмечается, что агентами влияния на этих уровнях являются художники, духовенство, философы и ученые. Их связь с зарубежными странами часто не прямая, а косвенная и проявляется в дискурсах, текстах и смыслах, которые эти акторы продвигают в информационном пространстве общества, на которое они оказывают влияние. Однако следствием такого влияния является глубокая инкультурация общества-объекта влияния. Отмечается, что агенты среднего уровня - это актеры СМИ, в том числе журналисты, популярные блоггеры, лидеры мнений в СМИ и социальных сетях. Их цель как агентов влияния - формировать общественное мнение, популяризировать определенные идеологические доктрины, культурные и художественные проекты, философские мировоззрения и научные идеи. Последствия внешних воздействий с их стороны достижимы быстро. Однако долгосрочное закрепление этих последствий может быть незначительным, особенно в контексте плюралистического информационного поля и вторжения в глобальные медиа-сети. Отмечается, что агенты более низкого (прямого) влияния - это агенты, которые влияют на непосредственное принятие решений государственными органами (парламентами, исполнительными органами), в том числе политиками, государственными служащими, правительственными и неправительственными экспертами. В итоге делается вывод, что для социологии перспективными для исследования можно считать первую и вторую и в меньшей степени третью группы. Это следует из того, что для государств, осуществляющих внешнее влияние, значимы долгосрочные последствия в культуре, социальных институтах, отношениях социальных групп, социальных макропроцессах. Отмечено, что такие изменения начинают инициировать агенты более низкого уровня. Затем, учитывая стабильность общественного строя, быстро раскрываются факты их проникновения, что становится поводом для разоблачения и дальнейшего преследования.

Ключевые слова: агент влияния, внешнее влияние, нормативные определения, социоаналитические определения, конспиративные определения агентства влияния, медиа и социологические определения агентства влияния.