

Section Two

INTELLIGENT MATTER

Social Turbulence as the Scientific Phenomenon: Operational and Strategic Change

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Perhaps for the first time in its history, the Ukrainian scientific community is at the epicenter of large-scale geopolitical changes, and undoubtedly for the first time, the Ukrainian people are uniting advanced democratic forces around themselves. The unpredictable behavior of social systems after reaching a threshold level of socio-political energy within the system is called social turbulence. The article investigates Social Turbulence as the Scientific Phenomenon, as well as Operational and Strategic Change, resulting from the analysis of current events. The Ukrainian people's war for their independence is a key factor causing political dissent in the functioning social system. It is the energy of political dissent of Ukrainians that causes social turbulence and, as a result, the change of the governing "world elite" and the reform of global institutions. The proposals of the "world leaders" Trump, Schröder and others to "cede" the territories of the Crimean Peninsula and Donbas in exchange for imaginary security guarantees from Russia demonstrate the true "effectiveness" of the existing security system and its unwillingness to withstand global challenges.

Keywords: social turbulence, scientific phenomenon, social trust, political dissent, social system

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Introduction

Perhaps for the first time in its history, the Ukrainian scientific community is at the epicenter of large-scale geopolitical changes, and undoubtedly for the first time, the Ukrainian people are uniting advanced democratic forces around themselves. The courage, determination and wisdom of the citizens of Ukraine, shown in the war against Russia, forced the world community to change the understanding of the place of Ukraine in global processes, as well as pay attention to the work of global institutions and the so-called “world leaders.” In the context of war, the position of the former President Donald Trump is being re-evaluated, who, according to Marshall Cohen, “praised Putin for how he handled the takeover of Crimea” and predicted that “the rest of Ukraine will fall (...) fairly quickly.” Echoing Kremlin propaganda, Trump said in a TV interview that the Crimean people “would rather be with Russia,” and that was “a position he also pushed in private” (Cohen, 2022). These were the actions of Trump and his Administration that “weakened Ukraine, divided NATO, emboldened Putin, and helped get us to where we are today” (Cohen, 2022).

In the context of war with Russia, the actions of German leaders, who “tacitly” encouraged Russian aggression in 2014, hampered the process of Ukraine’s integration into the European Union, while increasing economic cooperation with the aggressor country, receive a new assessment. It turned out that “Nord Stream-2” is a “political project,” and ex-Chancellors of Germany Gerhard Schröder and Angela Merkel, who actively promoted it, still continue to justify Putin’s actions. Anja Brockmann disappointingly claimed that Angela Merkel, who has long been considered the most powerful woman in the world, “does not doubt the correctness of her policy towards Russia.” Merkel stated this at the press conference on June 8, 2022, after four months of the war in Ukraine (Brockmann, 2022). The German establishment continues to cooperate with Russia, thereby actually financing its invasion of Ukraine. For example, the largest German oil and gas producer, Wintershall Dea, does not want to exit its holdings in Russia. “Our opinion of the Russian business has not changed,” said CEO Mario Mehren on Tuesday when the half-year figures were presented” (Gasförderer, 2022).

Such examples reveal the scale of institutional and ideological changes taking place in the world. The President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskiy is forced to dedicate his regular appeals not only and not so much to the world establishment, but to the world community. In this way, the dissent from the ruling elites and the existing system of global security supported by them is expressed. The Ukrainians are initiating the change of world elites and the reform of global institutions.

The unpredictable behavior of social systems after reaching a threshold level of socio-political energy within the system is called social turbulence. The author investigates social turbulence as the Scientific Phenomenon, as well as Operational and Strategic Change, resulting from the analysis of current events. The Ukrainian people’s war for their independence is a key factor causing political dissent in the functioning social system. It is the negative energy of the political dissent of Ukrainians that causes social turbulence and, as a result, a change in the governing elites and a reform of world institutions. Peace in exchange for the territories of Crimea and Donbas, which is offered by “world leaders” Trump, Schröder and others, is regarded by the Ukrainian people as aggressor’s encouragement and injustice. The global security system must punish the aggressor, but not encourage his actions.

Social turbulence as the scientific phenomenon

A scientific phenomenon is an event or a sequence of events occurring in the natural and man-made world that can be observed and provoking thoughts and questions. The main feature of scientific phenomena is their use in instructional sequences to convey the personal experience of observation and in such a way as to construct an explanation based on evidence. The scientific phenomenon requires understanding and using fewer related scientific ideas to explain.

The first studies of turbulence as a scientific phenomenon date back to the second half of the 20th century, when the results of physical studies of turbulence began to be used to study various areas of human activities. For a comprehensive overview of the theoretical concepts of turbulence, see Jonathan H. Reed (Reed, 2021). In general, five dimensions of environmental turbulence were established along with a measurement scale. “The dimensions are: 1) complexity of the environment, 2) novelty of successive challenges encountered in the environment, 3) rapidity of change in the environment, 4) visibility (unpredictability) of the future, and 5) frequency of shifts in the level of turbulence. The scale defines five levels of turbulence for each dimension: 1) a repetitive environment (no change), 2) expanding (slow incremental change), 3) changing (fast incremental change), 4) discontinuous (discontinuous but predictable change), and 5) surprising (discontinuous and unpredictable change)” (Reed, 2021).

The most impressive results of the study of Social turbulence as the scientific phenomenon itself were achieved in the studies of Economic and social turbulence, which are interrelated. For example, the entrepreneurial opportunities and ethical dilemmas presented by technological turbulence were studied. The complexity of the relationship between the new entrants of the system and those already working in the established system was demonstrated. New entrants, using productive (e.g., innovation), unproductive (e.g., rent-seeking), and destructive (e.g., criminal) entrepreneurship, are essentially challenging the established industrial morals and laws. They are trying to change the socio-political legitimacy while the rest of the entrants withstand them upholding their rights (Hall & Rosson, 2006).

The developments in Economic and social turbulence helped understand the cause of economic and social upheavals in country states, as well as suggest the necessary ways to reform government institutions. For example, Michael Mitsopoulos and Theodore Pelagidis explained a unique international paradox. In the 1990s, the Greek economy combined relatively strong growth rates with a very weak performance on many other fronts ranging from poor labor and product market institutions and low competitiveness to poor environmental protection and high levels of corruption (Mitsopoulos & Pelagidis, 2009). The authors revealed the cause of subsequent crises in Greece and suggested ways to eliminate them.

Some industries have been found to be inherently turbulent, regardless of their past, present and future. Predictors of both operational and strategic changes have been identified, which include the level of turbulence and previous experience in managing the industry to bring about change (Reed, 2021).

In general, social turbulence is inherently change, which in itself can be both an opportunity and a threat. Social turbulence can be represented as follows. When the energy within the social system is low, i.e., when there is general satisfaction or at least assent with the government, the society shows social trust in the institutions of state power and management of the system as a whole. When the energy inside the system is high, i.e.

political dissent has reached critical values, social turbulence arises, which reorganizes or radically changes the institutions and other mechanisms of social ordering that exist in the social system.

One of the most important conclusions drawn as a result of a comprehensive analysis of the literature on the study of Social Turbulence as a scientific phenomenon is that the nature of the relationship between social trust and the dynamics of the growth of political dissent is still minimally studied and understood, and the studies conducted focus their attention mainly on the macroeconomic perspective, and not on the strategy of managing the social system.

Social trust and political dissent

Management of the social system is understood by us as a service to establish good order and effective mechanisms that regulate social and economic exchange. In fact, these are actions aimed at harmonizing social trust and political dissent. When in a social system there are millions of social particles that are simultaneously political actors, there will always be a significant part of the population displaying political dissent. These frustrated social particles, if they are energetic enough, will cross the threshold of the turbulent system, creating social whirlpools and whirlwinds that destroy social trust in society. These social particles will store the “internal energy” of this frustration, and the overall energy of the system will become higher making the system unstable and causing social turbulence. Let us briefly consider the meanings of social trust and political dissent as key actors of social turbulence.

Social trust is the main component of social capital (Burciu et al., 2020). Human virtues such as honesty, moderation, and duty fulfillment create a climate of interpersonal trust among people in the social system, while dissatisfaction with social services, non-democratic relations between government and citizens, ignorance of significant social identity, contribute to the accumulation of negative energy in the system, which leads to turbulence.

Social trust was defined from different points of view, i.e., from psychological, sociological, philosophical, and economical. In general, social trust means “the expectation that a person has from another person, group, or institution that they/it will manifest an ethical behavior now or in the future that is correct and oriented towards the common good” (Burciu et al., 2020). The analysis of Burciu et al. shows that there is a pronounced tendency in the social system “to trust people, groups, or institutions that exhibit predictable behaviors that are based on values close to or similar to ours” (Burciu et al., 2020). This tendency is formed by the institutions of state power as a set of core values promoted through education obtained in the family, school and social environment.

Trust is a key “social agent” that contributes to the functioning of the social system and its effective management. Trust always means the expectation of honest and correct behavior of people within the social system.

The transition from trust to distrust within the social system can occur gradually or suddenly along with the appearance of external perturbing factors and the creation of unpredictable context. Such main context is presented by political dissent.

In 1990, Anthony Giddens suggested a theoretical conception of the nature of modernity to the scientific community, which is based on the issues of security versus danger and trust versus risk (Giddens, 2008). According to Giddens, modern global social system, or “everyday life” on a global scale, is nothing more than the work of disintegrated institutions that link local practices to global social relations. As a result, The Sustainable Development Goals promoted by the UN (The Sustainable, 2015) are nothing more than a utopia, because

the nature of modernity is actually a risk. In fact, the international community as a social system is prone to social turbulence, because within the system, social trust and political dissent are combined.

In the modern nature of the social system, Giddens identified (1) globalization of risks, both in terms of intensity and in the sense of expansion of the number of related events affecting an increasing part of the population and (2) the risks created by “socialized nature” resulting from the infusion of human knowledge into material environment and changing relationships between people and the physical environment (Giddens, 2008).

The developed theoretical model of modernity helped Giddens to formulate the concept of ontological security as the main source of trust, which is based on the sense of security of people and things that are central to the concept of trust (Giddens, 2008).

However, for our study, namely, for understanding of Operational and Strategic Change in social turbulence, it is necessary to investigate the definition of political dissent.

Political dissent as a form of negative energy in a social system occurs when the relations between social positions and between social actors is threatened; when political power, as a key system-forming actor of the social system, does not provide “good order.”

According to Kowalewski, the greater the number of political actors claiming to be in control of a social system, the greater the likelihood of political dissent is and hence social turbulence (Kowalewski, 2019). It is explained by the fact that there will always be those who lose in the struggle for power, and the groups in which they exist will eventually become more and more radical as their inability to successfully exercise political power continues.

Political dissent is formed from the fact that the most active representatives of society are tempted by the opportunity to exercise power, but then they are disappointed in trying to do so and move into the category of radical opposition to power. In all cases, political dissent is caused by a sense of justice and a comparison of the normative vision with the real situation (individual or group). In general, two directions of the political dissent can be pointed out: “(1) “inward,” which results in changing the relationships within a group (by upholding a common perspective and shared beliefs); and (2) “outward,” when complaining enables change to the social structure” (Kowalewski, 2019). The identity function is associated with the creation of collective assessments of reality, and the relationship function is associated with the initiation and maintenance of social bonds.

Political dissent is considered one of the main responses of citizens and the main reason initiating social turbulence. The statements of politicians that political dissent is controlled by voting and that modern democracies make it possible to defend one’s interests and values with the help of arguments and votes, i.e. manifestations of social trust, are refuted by the crises of modern democracies. The European Social Survey provides interesting answers to questions about the relationship between political dissent and political activism (ESS Round 7, 2014). Comparison of average values of overall satisfaction with the life and some aspects of the situation in the country (economy, education, healthcare) in groups declaring their political participation or lack of it, allows us to speak of significant differences for all countries. Activities such as organizing or signing petitions are more likely to be undertaken by those who are satisfied with their life in general and political life, in particular, while participating in protest politics is more often undertaken by those who are dissatisfied.

The Legatum Prosperity Index, in its turn, exposes a comprehensive picture of the institutional, economic and social aspects of prosperity (The Legatum Prosperity Index, 2021). This index reflects the results of 167 countries. The areas considered important for the prosperity are inclusive societies, open economies, and empowered people. Social

capital is one of the pillars on which an inclusive society is based, and personal well-being is better ensured in the societies where social trust is one of the main values. According to The Legatum Prosperity Index, North American society (with a special focus on the US) is losing out in terms of unity, largely due to the tendency to emphasize institutional distrust. (The Legatum Prosperity Index, 2021).

Factors causing Social Turbulence

The last decades have been marked by a noticeable trend toward diversification of risks and a significant increase in the destructive potential of risks. The most recent World Economic Forum Global Risk Report shows that vulnerable societies exacerbate macroeconomic risk factors and contribute to social turbulence on a global scale (Granados Franco, 2020).

Kotler and Caslione identified and investigated a number of factors that cause turbulence that is described by the term *chaotics* (Kotler & Caslione, 2009). Kotler and Caslione considered these factors in relation to the post-crisis business environment, while we studied them in relation to the social system.

Factor F1: The information revolution.

“The Internet, telecommunications, and digitalization provide almost unlimited access to information/knowledge for all individuals and organizations, which means access to the main resource to compete globally” (Kotler & Caslione, 2009). The Internet and online communications have become a technology for the modern social system that can simultaneously reduce and/or increase social trust and political dissent. For instance, according to Giddens, social upheaval in modern time is inevitable, since risk is characteristic of its nature (Giddens, 2008). However, if it is added with the global pandemic and the war unleashed by Russia in Ukraine, then we are faced with the unprecedented fact of “certain-uncertainty.” In this context, the Information Revolution as a factor intensifies social turbulence, because the Internet and online communications spread and accumulate significant energy flows of political dissent. Regular appeals of representatives of the Ukrainian nation to the peoples of the world and their leaders have increased distrust in the existing “world leaders” and global institutions and, accordingly, have reduced the value of social trust on a global scale. Nevertheless, the victory of Ukraine in the war with Russia can also start the reverse process. The Internet and online communications can similarly spread and accumulate social trust towards new “world leaders” and reformed global institutions. The negative energy inherent in political dissent will decrease, and the social system will go through social turbulence and reach its new qualitative level.

Another example is discussed in the article by de la Cierva et al. In 2020, a Latin American university with a Catholic ideal went through a crisis when the content of an online bioethics course on homosexuality was posted on Twitter. This communication case study describes the objective and subjective circumstances of the case, how the problem developed, how various stakeholders reacted, and what the university did to deal with the crisis (de la Cierva et al., 2021). The authors of the study demonstrated how one publication on a social network could drastically reduce social trust and cause social turbulence across the state, with subsequent reform of the educational system, state institutions, and change in the governing elite.

Factor F2: Disruptive innovations.

“The technological developments of the last two and a half centuries have ensured a clear dominance of the West over other civilizations as they have led to increased productivity and economic growth, as well as increasing funds invested in research, education, continuous innovation, and other similar features of modern society” (Kotler & Caslione, 2009).

However, these technologies often encroach on the life and land of indigenous peoples. Their advance in the countries with developing economies takes place without any recognition and participation of these peoples. Political dissent further reinforces the unequal distribution of costs and benefits from such projects, since their decision is coordinated exclusively with the governing elite. Such societies will eventually find a way to release the pent-up political dissent caused by Disruptive innovations. The social system will “go through” social turbulence and eventually return to the state of social trust. The only question is how this release of negative energy will occur. Will it be a peaceful transition, likely to be accompanied by radical changes in the way the social system is run, or through a “Great Reset” and social collapse, likely to be accompanied by violence and destruction?

Factor F3: Ascension of the “rest of the world”

The financial crises of the 2000s actually aggravated the process of redistribution of forces in the world economy. China, the newly industrialized countries of Asia, and wealthy countries of the Middle East have begun to assert themselves as emerging economies. The BRICS group of countries, in fact, was able to oppose itself to modern democracies. At the same time, democracies exhibit turbulent behavior in the sense that they are irregular, dissipative and diffuse, as is the case with physical turbulence. The irregularity of democracies manifests itself in unstable configurations of political alliances between groups with different identities and interests. Democracies are dissipative in the sense that they constantly need more and more energy to maintain social trust and reduce political dissent. They demonstrate a constant desire for more and more suffrage, which ultimately leads to the fact that the internal energy of the social system becomes unsustainable and must find an outlet, usually either in communal or factional violence, or in a revolution leading to the more authoritarian and low-energy system. Finally, democracies are diffuse in the sense that they tend to homogenize social and class lines, leading to the destruction of the aristocratic leadership caste that traditionally provided the nation with strong social trust.

Compared to modern democracies, the BRICS group of countries are monarchies and aristocracies. In the systems of this type, there are far fewer political actors and, therefore, much less opportunity for the accumulation of negative energy due to political frustration that occurs when one’s political expectations do not correspond to reality. When the vast majority of social particles in a society do not initially have any political expectations, because they do not have a share of sovereignty and suffrage, then there is much less room for unrealized expectations, embodied in political dissent. In monarchical and aristocratic systems, political dissent tends to exist within the upper classes and manifests itself in court intrigues and the like, rather than wide-ranging strife or violence.

Factor F4: Hyper-competition

“Disruptive innovations, IT, the knowledge revolution, and the new “actors” in different markets together generate new driving forces of globalization and lead to an unprecedented increase in competition between large multinational corporations in different markets” (Kotler & Caslione, 2009). Those social systems that are less subject to social turbulence have a competitive advantage in the long run. Thus, modern democracies often win in the short term but lose in the longer term. Democracies, whose existence lasted more than two centuries, are unknown to modern history, while social systems with a monarchical and authoritarian system of government have existed for more than five centuries. For example, the Venetian aristocracy existed for more than 800 years and was destroyed by external intervention and not as result of internal processes.

Factor F5: The environment

Over the past four decades, international institutions and organizations, governments, the media, as well as the public in Western countries have exerted unprecedented pressure on all categories of companies to determine a specific code of conduct, especially in relation to environmental protection, consumer protection and the use of green technologies. As a result, Russia is blackmailing Europe with a “cold winter,” and Russian gas and oil have become the instruments of political pressure on the governments of European states, which has led to a virtual split within the European Union and a decrease in the effectiveness of the European security system.

Factor F6: Customer ability

Together with the expansion of the Internet, social media, and e-commerce, consumers around the world have acquired many sources of information, documentation, and choices for certain products and services. Consumers can already set clear product requirements and choose between different distribution options, which requires companies to be transparent and ethical.

Factor F7: Sovereign funds and other current factors

Funds from China, Singapore, Abu Dhabi and Kuwait have huge liquidity that is invested in corporations listed on Wall Street or on major European stock exchanges. The aggressive strategy of the funds is aimed at overcoming the protective barriers built by governments around certain industries or strategic sectors important to national security. “Other current factors” include the emergence of social crises generated by various factors and with influence at global, regional, national, or local levels; factors such as military conflicts such as those in Syria; political conflicts; international terrorism; cyber warfare; pandemics such as the current one; etc.” (Kotler & Caslione, 2009).

In general, these factors can, individually or in combination, generate real chaos in a social system. They can suddenly reduce social trust in the management of the system and the governing elite, or they can suddenly increase political dissent, causing the system to enter a state of social turbulence.

Conclusions

It is obvious, that uncertainty, turbulence and a chaotic business environment have become undesirable, but omnipresent “features” of social systems after the global crisis of 2007. This state of affairs with the social climate has greatly aggravated since the end of 2019 and up to the present due to the global pandemic, international terrorism, cyber wars, possible election manipulation, but most importantly, the Russian invasion of Ukraine launched on February 24, 2022.

Looking back at the consequences caused by previous peaks of social turbulence, regardless of their causes and nature, it should be claimed that changes are expected in many areas of political, economic and social life. First, at the microsocial level, the configuration of social trust models will change; interest in innovation and the introduction of new technologies in the sphere of the national military-industrial complex will increase; bets will be made on new approaches to human resource management that can reduce political dissent. Consistent reform of institutional and systemic management is expected at the macrosocial and global levels. The global security system is an immediate response to the violation of social trust by any state and the effective suppression of political dissent by reforms, as well as as operational and strategic change.

Operational change is associated with improving the structure, developing new products, introducing new technologies, decision-making procedures, control systems, etc. The change of this type occurs much more often than the strategic change. The ability to continuously improve through operational change is a valuable quality of a social system.

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