

## SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY

Kh. F. Akramov

Tashkent State University of Uzbek Language and Literature named after  
Alisher Navoi Senior Lecturer Doctor of Sociology (PhD) Sociology Orientation Student  
xasakramov@gmail.com

Kokanboeva G. S.

D. Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
gulnozaqoqonboyeva@gmail.com

### Abstract

This article is about the social conversion theory of George Homans and Peter Blau. In this book by Homans (Homans G. C. Human Group, New York, 1950), social exchange theory is a model for interpreting society as a series of interactions between people based on the assessment of rewards and punishments. According to this view, our interaction is determined by the rewards or penalties received by others, which we evaluate (consciously or unconsciously) using a model of cost-benefit analysis. Homans theory is based on the rules of mutual exchange of rewards (positive support) and punishments (negative support). Humans divide research objects into groups. In the process of studying these groups, the sociologist determines the dependence of the feelings of their members on their actions. The reasoning cited in the article is that theories are still important and desirable today.

**Keywords:** action, behavior, reward, success, action, value, incentive, deprivation, costs, result of action, income, approval, aggression, rationality.

### Introduction

At present, the theories that are applied to life in the developed world of science are replenished day by day, and research work is being carried out extensively on them. This is the breadth of opportunities that we lay down to give in to the younger generation. I will write about the exchange in this article.

Exchange (in economics) is the mutual exchange of people's labor activities or products.

Social exchange theory (American sociologist J.) is a theory created by humans that explains the success of human interaction through mutually acquired interests. According to this theory, a person seeks to get the maximum benefit from communication and minimize costs. In addition, the behavior of an individual depends on how society reacts to its past actions. Homans devoted a chapter of his book "Social Behavior: Its Elementary Forms" to the theory of social exchange.<sup>1</sup>

According to the American sociologist, it is here that the possibilities of sociology as a science are concentrated in the field of studying interpersonal interaction. Although social exchange theory has been found in economics and psychology, it was first developed by sociologist George Homans, who wrote an essay in 1958 entitled "Social Behavior as an Exchange." Later,

<sup>1</sup> Homans G. C. Social Behavior Its Elementary Forms N. Y., 1961



sociologists Peter Blau and Richard Emerson further developed the theory. I am writing to you about the theories of social exchange of sociologist George Homans and Peter Blau in my interpretation of self-esteem.

**Discussion and results.** In sociology, the theory of social exchange as an independent methodological direction was distinguished in the 1950s–60s of the XX th century in the United States. The center of the theory of exchange is the analysis of the relationship between actors (activity subfields) in various social structures. The individuals enter into a relationship with each other to meet their needs. The social relationships that unite humans in different forms of association form the main object of social research by these concept theorists.

Behaviorism, utilitarianism, and structural functionalism are considered predecessors directly involved in the theory of social exchange. In addition, this theory is inextricably linked with microeconomics. But the roots of this methodological approach are deeper. According to Peter Blau, one of the founders of the theory of social exchange, one can also see ideas about this theory in Arastu's work. He also believes that such views can be seen in Laroshfuko, Mandeville, and Adam Smith.

The roots of the theory of social exchange can be traced in sociology in the direction of behaviorism; P.A. Sorokin's first monograph can be seen in crime and courage: confession and reward.

George Homans and Peter Blau are credited as the founders of social exchange theory.<sup>2</sup>

George Homans said:

An important advantage of exchange theory is that it can bring sociology closer to economic science. Economic science studies the exchange that occurs under certain conditions and makes extensive use of the internal quantitative measure of value.

Next, I think of the usefulness of social behavior theory as an exchange and the nature of the statements that this theory may contain.

Homans speaks of six axiomatic positions (postulates) of social conversion theory.

1. Axiom of success: the more a person's corresponding actions are awarded, the higher the likelihood of their repetition. 2. Axiom of stimulation: if, when stimulated, the action leads to behavior, then, as a result of the repetition of the stimulus, the individual seeks to repeat this action. 3. Axiom of value: the value of the outcome of an individual's action, the more valuable it is, tends to repeat this action.

4. The axiom of deprivation-satiety: the more often an individual receives a certain reward in the recent past, the more often a person's learning (satiety) also increases; that is, the greater the value of the result of the action decreases, the less the person is eager to repeat it.

5. Axiom of aggression-affirmation: (a) when the individual does not receive the incentive which expected, a mood of discontent is observed in him. An aggressive act in a state of dissatisfaction will be more valuable to him than an incentive not received.

b) If an individual's action is welcomed (or even more), then they experience a sense of pleasure, and the likelihood that they will repeat the approved behavior increases.

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<sup>2</sup> История социологии в Западной Европе и США. Учебник для В ф з 0 В. Ответственны й редактор — академ ик И УУ РАН Г. В. Осипов. — М.И здательская группа НОРМА—ИН Ф РА • М, 1999. — 405 с.



6. Axiom of rationality: when deciding between alternative actions, an individual chooses a value whose value of the result is multiplied by the probability of obtaining it.

All of these six axiomatic rules are intended to concretize the concept of exchange as the main method of people's behavior in the process of interaction between them. Homans, as a sociologist, is open to the fact that he primarily cares about people and their behavior. He writes: "We are more interested in people's positions than in their relationships, especially in what state they are in and how they get out of it if they do not lead to the action they expect. We have always had a social science in which people "orient themselves" or are only "oriented" to action but never act." The above-mentioned rules of exchange theory are crucial to optimizing people's behavior and their interactions in different social structures and areas.

J. According to Homans, society should see that microsociology is made up of interacting human individuals who have a function. In addition, this interaction, as noted above, is characterized by behaviors based on the exchange of rewards, achievements, successes, values, aggressiveness, and satiety, among others.

Within the framework of the exchange paradigm, the value-normative level of interaction comes to the fore. But if in Homans this level (values, norms, roles, status) clearly prevails, then its followers (P. Blau, R. Emerson) seek to develop conception by moving towards broader structural connections based on structural and functional analysis of interaction. All researchers in this paradigm claim to have significantly exaggerated the role of the psychological aspects of conception. Nevertheless, its value lies in the desire to find a transition from the micro sociological level to the macro sociological level of the study of social life, which combines the analysis of the activities of human command and social action and says that it is a complexity of different levels. J. Homans<sup>3</sup>

Peter Blau's exchange theory

Blau's goal is "to understand the social structure by analyzing the social processes that govern the relationships between individuals and groups. The main question in this is how, in social life, human associations have more complex structures." The scientist seeks to overcome Homans' particular focus on elementary forms of social life and analyze complex structures; "the main goal of the sociological study of interpersonal interaction processes is to provide a basis for an understanding of evolutionarily social structures and emerging social forces that characterize their development."

Blau focused on the exchange process, which, in his opinion, governs a large part of human behavior and forms the basis of interpersonal and intergroup relations. The scientist studies a four-stage sequence that focuses on social structure, interpersonal exchange, and later on social change:

Stage 1: interpersonal exchange Individuals are not always rewarded equally by each other. At the same time, they also evaluate each other in terms of constant access to resources.

Stage 2: differentiation of status and power. The fact that there are different options for meeting mutual needs and moving to an organization recognized by all participants in the exchange

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<sup>3</sup> Хофманс Д. Ж.К. Социальное поведение: его элементарные формы (фрагменты книги) / Перевод В. Г. Николаева //Социальные и гуманитарные науки. Серия 11. Социология. – 2001, № 2. – С. 117-163; № 3. – С. 132-169



Stage 3: Legalization and Organization The social structure arises from the interaction of individual individuals and itself begins to influence this interaction, referring to two types of organizations: the first is formed as a result of exchange and mining processes (it is random), and with the second, organizations are created specifically to achieve certain goals.

Stage 4: Opposition and change: As a rule, the creation of organizations is associated with the emergence of opposition and conflict between them.

Interestingly, Blau no longer recognizes the idea of building macro-theory on a micro-basis. transition from micro-level to macro-level at once. It says that the person is in a difficult situation. Blau and Homans carried out similar processes. However, the concept of social exchange promoted by Blau only involves taking into account actions that are dependent on or unrelated to the reward provided by other subjects; if the expected reactions are not observed, the actions in the individual will change. People are attracted to each other for many reasons, and this encourages them to form social associations. When initial connections are made, mutual rewards help to support and expand them. The opposite can also happen: with insufficient rewards, the association weakens or disintegrates. Rewards are internal (love, affection, respect) or external (money, physical labor). The parties do not always award each other equally. Such equality leads to a difference in power in the association.

In addition, Blau also considered small groups that existed within social organizations. For example, he argues that there are opposition groups in each of them. As for organizations of the first type, criminal groups appear in the process of interaction. In the latter case, management and opposition groups are included in the body. In both cases, group differentiation is inevitable, which sets the stage for the emergence of opposition and conflict between leaders and supporters. Unlike Homans, having studied complex social structures, Blau emphasizes the need to adapt the theory of exchange to the format of social contacts. Blau recognizes significant differences between small groups and large communities, while Homans reduces this gap by trying to explain all social guidance based on basic psychological principles.<sup>4</sup>

## Conclusion

Social exchange theory suggests that we take the benefits of relationships and subtract costs to determine their value. According to Homans, people really punish and reward each other in the exchange process, but they do not always strive to get maximum profit. Not only money or material things, but also other values, such as support, love, and kindness, will also be a means of exchange.

Blau J. Unlike Homans, he focused not on the study of the psychological causes of interpersonal behavior but on the sociological aspects of interaction in different homogeneous social structures.

According to him, turnover is “actions that depend on the rewards that some people receive from others and continue until the cessation of these rewards.

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<sup>4</sup> Блау П. М. Различные точки зрения на социальную структуру и их общий знаменатель / Американская социологическая мысль / Под р ед. В. И. Добренькова. М.: МГУ, 1994. – С. 3-16



"Blau's goal is "to understand the social structure by analyzing the social processes that govern the relationships between individuals and groups. The main question in this is how, in social life, human associations have more complex structures." The scientist seeks to overcome the special attention of humans to elementary forms of social life and analyze complex structures. "The main objective of the sociological study of interpersonal interaction processes is to provide a framework for the understanding of evolutionary social structures and social forces that characterize their development and emerge."

In order to truly understand the theory of social exchange, it is necessary to recognize the aspects on which it is based.

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