

Cultural subcode transformation “elite - masses” in the era of digitization

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Abstract. The diversity of human culture is fixed in its codes, that is, in models of relations, behavior and activities of people. Today, in the era of the fourth industrial revolution, one of the system-forming cultural codes - the hierarchical division of society into the elite and the masses is dramatically transformed. Understanding the new cultural realities in the transition of society to a new “digital” state is based on Alexei Leontyev’s theory of consciousness activity and the concept of “ideal” by Evald Ilyenkov. The methods of philosophical reflection analyze the change in the essential characteristics of the cultural subcode "elite - masses" when the conditions of society are changing. This cultural subcode itself is being transformed; a new “technological elite” is emerging based on nano-bio-info-cognitive technologies (NBIC-technologies). At the same time, and thanks to the same technologies and squeezing out the masses of people from the production process, more broadly, from the struggle for existence, the process of mass degradation and the reduction of thinking as a creative activity to stamps, while clichés and memorized patterns of movement are intensifying. Philosophical and culturalological understanding of the consequences of the technological revolution, the transformation of the cultural subcode "elite - masses" is an important area of research into the structure of the new type of social organization that is emerging in our lifetime.

1 Introduction

The concept of "cultural code" has become, thanks to Roland Barthes, one of the main tools of cultural analysis of society. The diversity of human culture is fixed in its codes, that is, in various types of public representations, rules of conduct and activities of people.

The word "code" itself should not be understood here in the strict, scientific meaning of the term. We call codes simple associative fields, a supertextual organization of values that impose an idea of a certain structure ... (Barthes, 1989, pp. 455- 456).

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Codes act as systems of restrictions, prohibitions and structuring of semantic and organizational elements of human society. At the same time, the decisive influence of cultural codes on the perception, behavior and activities of people is not perceived by them on a conscious level; it remains latent, hidden behind formal linguistic, artistic, social forms of activity. This determines the importance of understanding this phenomenon, bringing it to the level of professional reflection.

Following R. Barthes, in any era in any human society in the cultural code there can be a distinguished subcode hierarchical organization "elite - masses." This is the cultural code of governance, violence and submissionⁱ, the most general structural principle of the organization of human society.

No other systems such as rhizomes (Deleuze, and Guattari, 1976; Deleuze, and Guattari, 1980) or gentle systems (Manifesto, 2001) are capable of organizing people with greater efficiency to solve their tasks.

One hears a great deal today about "the end of hierarchy"...In any institution there has to be a final authority...someone who can make the final decisions and who can expect them to be obeyed. In a situation of common peril—and every institution is likely to encounter it sooner or later—survival of all depends on clear command. ... "Hierarchy," and the unquestioning acceptance of it by everyone in the organization, is the only hope in a crisis. (Drucker, 1999, p. 19).

Changing the content of the concept of the code "elite - mass" in the course of today's technological revolution is the main task of this article.

2 Research method

The attempt to solve the problem in this article is based on the theory of Alexei Leontyev's consciousness activity (Leontyev, 2009a; Leontyev, 2009b) and the concept of the "ideal" by Evald Ilyenkov (Ilyenkov, 1974; Ilyenkov, 1982; Ilyenkov, 2019).

The most significant point in the concept of activity consciousness is the understanding of thinking as activity in the form of a thing. That is, thinking, ideal acts as a form of thing given in a person's life practice. Or, on the other hand, the "ideal" is a form of life activity that acts as in the forms of the world of objective culture created by man.

3 Biological mechanisms of separation of the "elite" of society

In humans, the attractor of activity is not the objective visibility of the surrounding world as in animals inhabited in the world of "bodily images" (imagines corporeae by Spinoza), but its essential laws, that is, the dialectical logic of the existence and development of processes and phenomena. In human society, on top of the biological, animal psyche, there are strict limits on cultural development. Man unlike animals uses a new factor of adaptation and survival - social evolution. Society initially implies structure and hierarchy, relations of command and subordination. This produces a historically defined type of cultural subcode "elite - masses" in society.

4 Social mechanisms of the formation of a new "elite" of society

The concept of "elite" is not related to the concepts of "aristocracy", "ruling elite", "Forbes list", etc. This is not strict as it should be a component of the cultural code, a given

signifier. It is historically variable and for representatives of different strata of society there is a different amount of content, but at every historical moment people understand the elite of society - political, cultural, scientific, technical, industrial, financial - as well as certain people. The elite are those who set the trend for the historical process in their field. Ownership of large capital or a large position in a large corporation, for example, does not automatically determine membership in the financial or industrial elite.

The concept of “mass”, which is counter to the concept of “elite”, also cannot be clearly defined and, upon closer examination, reveals the specifics, features, and some remarkable details of the personality and biography of “ordinary people”.

Today, in the era of total digitalization of the economy and human relations in general, this cultural code is undergoing a critical transformation. The value of the old elite in all areas is declining. A new “digital elite” is emerging that defines the further development of society, the young representatives of which manifest themselves in all spheres of social activity - from politics to art, and, especially, in science, technology, finance, economics. The future lies with the elite already now, during the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

5 Characteristics of the transformed cultural subcode

The massive spread of high-speed broadband Internet and social networks Facebook and Instagram since 2007, digital technologies (primarily cloud technologies and Big Data), real-time tracking, control and processing tools - all that characterizes the Fourth Industrial Revolution, fundamentally changed the situation not only with the dissemination, accessibility of information and professional knowledge, but also with the private space of the individual, changed its basic characteristics - individuality (difference from others), independence of opinion (intellectual freedom), moral principles (spiritual basis). Recognition, determined by the number of likes on the network, replaces individuality, hype - independence of opinion, momentary egocentric pragmatism - moral principles. The basis of these processes is the lack of an independent creative social activity among the bulk of the population as the basis and main component of thinking. Creative social activity is not necessarily only the activity of artists, designers, inventors, designers. In any kind of activity, going beyond the framework of the template, taking into account new circumstances, independence in decision-making is creativity. Monotonous finger movements on the smartphone's display do not develop fine motor skills of fingers, activity in social networks is an imitation of activity, replacing for the majority real social communication. Such imitation does not develop or stimulate the activity of the human brain, the most important component of the thinking process. Social activity is simulated by various kinds of stamped reactions on the network, and this simulation is actively propagated among the bulk of young people.

The development of NBIC technology calls into question the very nature of man. Robotization, the Internet of things, virtual and augmented reality, artificial intelligence, cloud computing and Big Data, smart living environments and entire smart cities around the world, global high-speed communications and global transparency are creating a new stratum of young users of these technologies. There is a separation of people on the basis of ownership and, most importantly, on the basis of the ability to quickly adapt and master new, rapidly changing technologies. Chipization and “smart” face recognition technologies make many services technologically inaccessible for a population outside this stratum. The possibilities of predictive (personalized) medicine give rise to a biomedical distinction between a new “technological elite” with a sharply increased level of life expectancy at birth and a new “mass” lacking such an opportunity. The development of new biomaterials and the achievements of regenerative medicine, the successes of genetic engineering in

setting the body's desired properties necessary for survival in an unfavorable ecological environment are creating new people.

The biomedical division of the Earth's population is fixed by the fact that, culturally, in terms of the transfer of experience, young generations cease to need the experience of a generation of parents. We see on the example of the first two decades of the XXI century how throughout the life (far from ending) of one generation, technologies, lifestyle in new technological clusters, various smart cities around the world are changing rapidly.

At the same time, at the other extreme of the society, masses of people with the development of technological changes will more and more become "extra people" that are not built into the structure of society. With the changing conditions of life, the liberation of people of the "masses" from the need to participate in the processes of production, the creative transformation of the surrounding reality means the absence of the need for thinking. In this case, a person as a subject of a relationship to the world disappears, only a degrading consumer, a biological body, pure physiological needs, consuming material goods without any effort remain. Especially if the unconditional basic income (AML) is introduced everywhere and, thereby, the fundamental principles of a modern society based on commodity-money relations are destroyed.

The digital revolution, industrial Internet technology, robotics, and quantum computers will crowd out human production. However, the picture seems quite utopian when billions of people who are free from the daily struggle for subsistence and who receive livelihoods in the form of AML will become all together to sculpt oil and play the harp. Rather, we will encounter massive negative mental reactions, depression and aggression, or going into the world of virtual reality, using drugs or the latest neurotechnologies. This view is due to the understanding of the nature of thinking developed by the school of Leontiev and Ilyenkov, the understanding that thinking is the reaction of a highly organized social organism to the environment in the struggle for survival. If there is no such need, then according to the laws of evolution, this function of the body will die out, that is, the bulk of people who do not need to solve new creative tasks daily will lose their ability to think. This is happening today and on a fairly massive scale. People live according to stencils, certain memorized patterns, trajectories of movement in their usual subject environment. For this, thinking as a universal concrete creative activity is not necessary. Nature always respects the principle of saving strength, energy, and work.

6 Conclusion

Each person occupies a certain place in the system of society, and the more primitive a society is, the more severe and durable are the cultural restrictions that determine this place or cell. Under the conditions of such restrictions, the expulsion of a person from society means the breakdown of all social ties and the elimination of his hierarchical social status, that is, his "death" as a person and transformation into a slave or thing ("res"):

So what is slavery? ...Slavery is the ultimate form of being ripped from one's context, and thus from all the social relationships that make one a human being. Another way to put this is that the slave is, in a very real sense, dead. (*Graeber*, 2011, p. 198).

Today, numerous changes in technology and in society throughout the life of one generation are becoming the norm. In the coming decades, there will be no political stability or strong governments in the world. The formation of the new "technological elite" as a result of the fourth industrial revolution, which determines the development of the world, makes the masses, people excluded from this stratum, unnecessary from the point of

view of global development. Moreover, they become a threat to the further development of the world of technology. There is a problem of organization and management in the human community. In the coming decades, the confrontation between the small “new elite”, the new “golden billion” and the 8–9 billion remaining people, with the full political, technical, technological and mental superiority of the former, only tough methods of the social hierarchy can prevent the destruction of culture and the sliding of society into chaos, signs of what we are seeing today in tolerant Europe.

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ⁱ NOTES

Let us refer to the studies of French poststructuralists who performed a sophisticated analysis of social structures and relations, including those unpopular in philosophy such as workshops, schools, clinics, houses of the insane, prisons, barracks - all public limited spaces imposing a certain type of behavior on a person through various combinations of forces that Paul-Michel Foucault calls diagrams (Deleuze, 1986).