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# SOCIOLOGY OF CULTURE

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## ***MECHANISMS OF SELF-ORGANIZATION OF SOCIETY AND CULTURE: FROM THE PAST TO THE FUTURE***

*SUMMARY. This article presents an analysis of the mechanisms of socio-cultural dynamics. As a methodological framework the study supports theory of self-organization.*

*KEY WORDS. Society, culture, evolution, self-organization.*

The starting point of reasoning on the mechanisms of self-organization of a society and culture is a view of the instability of the world which, undergoing continuous changes, evolves to higher and higher forms of complexity, with an increasing internal variety of elements. Scientists assert that the universe's development is not limited to monotonous repetition of the same but is an open process directed into infinity [1]. Only mankind is capable of existing in a constantly changing world and not running into a condition of "Future Shock"[2] — the stunning confusion caused by a prompt rate of changes; actively reacting to such changes, accordingly, constantly forming new life strategies, responding to the developed complexity and the variety of the world.

At the same time, transition from an out-of-date, counterproductive strategy of living to a new, more effective one is extremely complex, problematic, dialectically inconsistent. In its frameworks two contrary processes face each other. Firstly, there is the process of differentiation connected with infinite growth in the variety of forms of socio-cultural life, and accordingly, with the birth of innovations. Secondly, there is the process of integration connected with the aspiration to ordering, structuring the developed variety, accordingly, with the formation of traditions. Both processes taken independently from each other are destructive. The mechanism of self-organization of a society can ideally be presented as a dialectic unity and a struggle of opposite processes — differentiation and integration where priorities are not and cannot be present, there is only equal interaction of centrifugal and centripetal forces. However, social practice shows that all is not so ideal and that not only dialectic, but also other mechanisms are possible — metaphysical means of interaction between differentiation and integration processes of self-organizing of a society and culture.

In particular, historically the horizontal combination of differentiation and integration processes was the earliest mechanism of self-organizing — socio-cultural structure dynamics showed the periodic alternation of processes of integration and differentiation, the domination of tradition and innovative breaks. Such a discrete, conflict-revolutionary way of development was caused by the priority of the integration processes, the primacy of tradition. Hence, the differentiation processes played a supporting role, innovation was qualified as destructive and subject to prohibitive forces. Innovative breaks influenced inevitably the living conditions of the individual in the changing world of crises in the traditional strategy of living. However, alienation from the developed traditions did not mean refusal of the traditional style of thinking, since the innovative break, finally, brought about the replacement of old traditions and fixed new ones, no less strict and obligatory. The basic mechanism of this kind of social-cultural self-organizing, using N.I. Lapina's terminology, can be named "traditionalization". This is defined by the researcher as: "constituzionalization of traditions and other elements of culture and social structure which give priority to the ordered norms and rules of behavior of subjects (traditional actions) in comparison with possibilities of their innovative actions" [3; 7]. Traditionalization — a certain type of outlook, whose basis is a view of the world with the condition of human life not subject to change. Such an attitude is formed during a collecting and hunting epoch and remains throughout the long period of domination of an agrarian traditional civilization. Objective dependence of the person on the environment causes a relationship of superstitious fear with nature, as an object of awe and religious worship. The traditionalistic strategy of life is a strategy of adaptation to a natural order which becomes sacred and appears as a firm divine or cosmic law. Traditionalism — a certain moral position, the moral type whose basis is the constant appeal to the authority of tradition, hence, alienation from the immanent, relative, profane, "this-side" meanings of life, and participation in transcendental, absolute, sacred, "other-side" meanings. Inherent in traditional morals, the accentuation of due and leveling of real, external prescription of ethical standards, give rise to such phenomena as dogmatism, confirming as a norm the ability to live ritualized behavior. Fondness of traditional morals in the absolute defines the domination of essentialist paradigms whose essence consists in giving priority to the essence of the person over his/her existence. It is morals of individual self-renunciation for the sake of general, partial submission to the whole, ideals of holism. The carrier of traditional morals is the individual for whom the patrimonial qualities of a person are always represented as more important, rather than individual ones. The traditional type of morals authorizes a special type of replication activity — simple reproduction aimed at a reconstruction of culture and societies in a constant condition. The statement of traditionalization as a strategy of being, socio-culturally, at historically early stages of development of culture and society is caused by many reasons: the domination of single logic, inclined to extreme semantic measures, inverse logics, the inability to synthesize, the dialogue of various senses, the absence of reflexion. Adherence to traditionalization has been substantially connected with conservatism inherent in the person. The fear of loss of the collected cultural experience — generated by long searches, tests and errors of strategy of life — leads to a sacralization of this experience, its deontologization, to transformation into specifications of living not subject to change — customs, rituals.

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Traditionalization — the most ancient strategy of social-cultural living — nevertheless, is not unique and is far from faultless. More perfect is the mechanism of vertical connection of two processes — integration and differentiation, their dialectics, dialogue. The conflict-inversion style of thinking is leveled by means of reflexion development, mediation, the dialogical logic synthesizing opposite meanings; conservatism is overcome as a result of the ability of development to accumulate, but not to tear away innovation. N.I. Lapin designates this type of socio-cultural self-organizing as “liberalization” defined by him as: “The expansion of freedom in the choosing and responsibility of subjects, an increase in the possibilities for innovative rationally-aimed actions by differentiation of the structure of a society, the occurrence and inclusion in it of new integrating elements, according to the complication of the individual, an eminence of its requirements and abilities” [3; 7]. Appreciably, liberalization is staticized owing to the reaction of a society and culture to world complication, the acceleration of the rate of its changes, as the response to crisis of a conflict-inverse life strategy, as result of the development of a reflexion, consciousness, a transformation of self-development into a strategy of human activity. Liberalization is a new form of outlook developing on the basis of perception of the world as a supreme value and the purposes of existence of the person. The basis of this attitude is formed by a creative type of morals. Creative morals are characterized by setting creativity as the highest blessing which is realized by means of protection, and creative creation of the world which is carried out according to an understanding of its essence, its laws. The basis of creative morals is the self-development principle, i.e. a principle of creation of a strategy of socio-cultural self-organization on the basis of the analysis and synthesis of various spheres of reality — nature, societies, cultures. Creative morals are formed as a result of the synthesis of developed transcendental and immanent, absolute and relative, sacral and profane, “other-side” and “this-side”, individual and general meanings of being. In similar interpretations, ethical standards appear as a product of the reflexion of the person in which frameworks there is a dialogue between due and real, an ideal norm and practice. The philosophical basis of creative morals is an existential paradigm, which means alienation of the subject from the established senses of existence and turning to authenticity-seeking — egoism. The subject of this search for semantic egoism always is the person. The statement of the idea of the moral autonomy of the person attracts alienation both from holistic and from individualist ideals — the social life of the person shows constant pressure between its collectivist and individualist aspects. The creative type of morals produces a strategy of expanded reproduction of culture and society. Frameworks of creativism try to overcome the step-like behavior of self-organization of society and culture, typical of traditionalization, the intermittence of its innovative dynamics; development turns to continuous process modernization, the updating of society and cultural regenerations that distinguish creativization, as an open form of social life, from traditionalization, as a closed one.

The formation of creativism is not at all mechanical. Transition from closed, traditionalist self-organizing strategy to the open, creative model is equivalent to radical transformation of the individual, their regeneration from the obedient executor to the active figure for whom self-development, self-updating is a way of life in the world. Transition from traditionalism to creativism becomes possible if there are

certain preconditions in a society, if there are precedents of infringement of the principle of submission to the authority of tradition, if there are rudiments of criticism of the traditional due, if the conflict of the traditional due and daily reality accrues. The major factor initiating alienation from the principle of authoritarianism of traditionalism, and adhesion to the principle of self-development of creativism, is the utilitarian relationship to the world as a set of real or potential means.

Utilitarianism acts as the antithesis of traditionalism. The utilitarian cultural moral believes the advantage of the individual, of society, to be the highest blessing. It is indicative that equivalent to the concept “advantage” in utilitarian discourse is the concept of “interest”. A key idea of utilitarianism is the idea of constructing the material and social well-being of the person or a society, conferring upon them highest blessing status. The theorist of utilitarianism J. Bentham wrote: “For the supporter of a principle of advantage, virtue is a blessing only in view of the pleasures which result from it; anger is a defect only owing to sufferings which accompany it. The moral blessing is a blessing only owing to its ability to make the physical blessings; moral harm only in the ability to make anger physical”[4]. Utilitarianism is characterized by reference to immanent, profane, relative, “this-side” meaning of life. Its key intention is the possibility to consider the refusal of the absolutization of any senses — the advantage of the person, as well as advantage of a society — relative concepts, therefore, and utilitarianism itself is synonymous with relativism. Utilitarian moral law finds expression in short but capacious maxima — “what brings the maximum advantage and pleasure to the person and, accordingly, to a society, is moral”. Thus, the utilitarian due is dependent on what exists, and practice determines the maintenance of ethical standards. Behavior rules get to depend on situational advantage, therefore acquire changeable maintenance. In frameworks of utilitarianism there are first sprouts of existentialist representations about the priority of existence of the individual over his/her essence. Symptomatically, therefore, J.J. Smart interprets an advantage principle as a principle of individual behavior [5].

At the same time, the ideal of original freedom for utilitarianism is not achievable — the idea of creativity, self-development for utilitarianism is not relevant, the aim of useful invention, social engineering is inherent to it. Accordingly, in utilitarian semantic space there is no value of the creative person, i.e. the subject of creativity. Utilitarianism can take collectivist or individualist forms, but its integral element is the egocentrism which can be cast both in individualist and in group forms. In frameworks of utilitarianism there is a reorientation of society and culture from simple reproduction to expansion. For utilitarianism it is inherent promotion, in the foreground of the system, of vital reference points of human advantage which aims at the multiplication of material and social welfare, which becomes the momentum of its internal dynamics. A. Ahiezer identifies two forms of utilitarianism — moderate and developed [6; 520-527]. Within the limits of moderate — extensive — utilitarianism, the problem of expansion of the volume of the blessings is addressed through the assignment of already created, existing blessings, technologies of wellness production. Characteristic of this form of utilitarianism is the consumer relation to the world, aimed at the capture, theft, leveling or redistribution of already available wellness. In the historico-cultural perspective inherent to moderate utilitarianism, the strategy of any loan of technologies gives rise to such phenomena as “catching up” modernization.

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Such modernization always has a superficial character. The bet on the use of ready means of wellness production, created by other people, finally leads to an acute contradiction between the growing requirements for the new wellness and the absence of skills of inventing technologies of wellness creation. Thus, moderate utilitarianism does not change the conditions of traditionalist minimalist ethics of work characterized by underexploitation of labor and resources. Developed — intensive — utilitarianism puts forward the idea of an increase in volume of wellness at the expense of an increase in the efficiency of the means of wellness production, innovative production technologies. It is possible to qualify developed utilitarianism as the spirit of mature productive business connected with raised requirement for achievement, enrichment not associated with simple thirst. Developed utilitarianism is a moral core of maximal ethics of work, under its influence there is a transition from the simple to the expanded type of public reproduction. Accordingly, this form of utilitarianism aims to give society indigenous modernization, i.e. modernization on the basis of activation of the internal reserves of a society of culture. It is possible to consider developed utilitarianism as the predecessor of creativity.

So, the self-organizing of a society and culture as an ideal generalization can be presented as a movement from traditionalism through utilitarianism to creativity. Utilitarianism thus appears, on the one hand, as criticism of an area of traditionalism, and on the other hand, as the force whose action attracts the devaluation of traditionalism and the formation of creativity. At the same time, the median position of utilitarianism in the typological triad of the strategy of the self-organizing of a society and culture is rather conditional. In fact, it can be treated as one of the earliest meanings of culture — morals.

Conditionally speaking, the birth of a society or culture as a unitary artifact and as a composite is constantly carried out in a society of artifacts which inevitability includes a certain initial utilitarian incubatory period when the search for a new strategy of living receives paramount importance. Actualization of the utilitarian relation to the world results for different reasons — a severe shortage of survival facilities, exhaustion of those or other vital resources, demonstration effect, etc. Owing to this, “the social order” for new technologies is formed, and also their “customers” and “executors” [7; 30]. The most effective products of the inventive, innovative activity of the latter is the collection of quality socio-cultural experience. Generalization and sublimation of this experience lead to the formation of values and senses which, being supported with ontological explanatory elements, develop in a complete world outlook system. Thus, new values and senses are born as a product of the sublimation, generalization and streamlining of the strategy of living generated under the obvious and latent influence of utilitarianism.

At the same time, between the experience of culture ordered as a value-semantic system and utilitarianism, there is no time at the beginning of this system, constantly there is a certain opposition. Eternally sensitive to world changes, rejecting any authority except advantage, utilitarianism makes amendments to existing experience, thereby, on the one hand, increasing its volume, while, on the other hand, gradually loosening its structural unity. The necessity of to reconstruct experience, search for new things, answer to the developed complexity of the collected information of the ordering ideas, a new system of values becomes an influence on and a consequence of utilitarianism. It is necessary to notice that experience relations as traditions

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and utilitarianism as a mechanism of attraction of innovation into the process of socio-cultural development undergo considerable changes. In frameworks of traditionalism, showing a culture sample of the “closed” type, experience — tradition dominates, whereas for utilitarianism it occupies a minor role. However, this changes in the process of the internal qualitative growth of utilitarianism. Actualization of utilitarianism against traditionalism means, as a matter of fact, the birth of a new image-due which, not excepting the old, traditional one, exists as a background of culture. This phenomenon has already been described by us as a bifurcation of the semantic vector of the culture in which one part still remains directed towards a traditional absolute, with transcendental aspects, and another turns to the utilitarian, relative, immanent. As a result, in culture there are simultaneously two kinds of due, setting a double standard of behavior: rules of traditionalism and rules of utilitarianism. The alternative utilitarian due originally exists in a semi-legal position of minor due, “common sense”, “world wisdom”, “basic truths”. However, already at this point in the development of culture utilitarianism deprives traditional moral standards of absolute authority, catalyzes their infringement in a practically more effective utilitarian strategy of activity. Thus, in culture there are precedents of deviation from tradition that can be shown in trifles, in an insignificant deviation from ritual, custom for the sake of benefit, pleasure. Such deviations from tradition accumulate to create conditions for the growth of utilitarianism, and the latter at the same time, corrodes traditionalism from within [8, 93]. The transition of utilitarianism from the moderate to the developed form, from its extensive to its intensive version, is directly proportional to the devaluation of traditionalism. This counter-process leads, at a certain stage, to utilitarianism and traditionalism acting on an equal footing. There is an opposition of two types of due — traditional and utilitarian. Creativism arises from this dramatic situation when there is a necessity for removal developed by the value-semantic contradictions. Removal-synthesis attracts the formation of creative morals. The morals of creativism assimilate both traditional and utilitarian values, overcoming the limitation of both and making elements of the self-organizing of a society and culture out of them.

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