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IDEOLOGICAL DETERMINATION OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS IN MODERN SOCIETY

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Abstract

The article deals with the specific nature of the ideological determination of social transformations at the current stage of global development. Ideas are defined as bases for the implementation of social changes. A connection is established between ideas, social imaginary and geographic localization of intellectual networks. Options for implementing social transformations are presented. The main options include modernization, revolution and coup. It is proved that the efficiency of performing regulative functions in society directly depends on the authorities and intellectuals' awareness of the state of the public life spheres within absolutely any state. The characteristic features of the mechanism of ideological determination are revealed. The process of the generation of ideas in the intellectual network is shown.

Keywords

Ideological determination – Global development – Modernization – Intellectual network

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Introduction

It may be useful to point out the abundance of instances of changes currently taking place in different societies. We also stress that the development of the majority of states, regardless of their belonging to a certain type in classification, is accompanied by multidimensional and complex transformations linked to numerous internal and external factors. In response to the challenges of modernity, authorities seek to develop the most efficient models and ways of social changes that foster the evolution of states. The options that facilitate social evolution allow one to identify the negative trends of its existence, as well as define the most prospective and substantiated ways for transformations.

The difference in the development of states and their social time depends on many factors, and the key factor is society's awareness of its processes. We believe that intellectual capital directly determines the successful development of a particular state. P.V. Kopnin believes that the idea was the highest result of the convergence of the thought and the object¹. N.S. Rozov associates ideas with the "social imaginary" and a clear link to geographic localization of social networks and centers and notes that "it can happen in some areas of the Earth but not in others, and even if it happened, nobody would find out"². We can see the developmental level of certain macroregions, which can be achieved merely by addressing the parameter of interest. Consequently, the realization of social networks reflects the intellectual state of society willing to meet the challenges of time and offer certain configurations of products of thought.

Therefore, the relevance of this work is determined by the urgency of the issue linked to studying the essence of ideational determination of social changes in modern society and connected to the applied nature of philosophy. The reasons that justify the validity of the choice of the study topic include the complexity of the structure of society, the unsustainability of its development, the risky nature and the presence of numerous internal and external conflicts. Essentially, these factors create the need for adapting social structures to the current situation with its historical, political, cultural and other parameters.

Methods

The methodological basis of the study is a synthetic framework that allows one to take into account the changes in the subject of the analysis. Besides general scientific methods and critical analysis, we used the provisions of comparative conceptual analysis, social realism, theoretical reconstruction, materialistic viewpoints, interdisciplinary and civilizational approaches.

Results

The analysis of academic literature indicates that the essence of social phenomena is significant for descriptions, evaluations and forecasts in terms of the set of features that reflect the content of the fundamental transformations carried out within social systems. Every society carries out its transformation into a new quality to achieve the desired model

¹ P.V. Kopnin, *Dialektika kak logika i teoriya poznaniya* (Moscow: Nauka, 1973).

² N.S. Rozov, *Idei i intellektualy v potoke istorii: makrosociologiya filosofii, nauki i obrazovaniya* (Novosibirsk: Manuscript, 2016).

of development³. By the way, one can equate the meaning of the notions "social changes" and "social transformations". We believe this to be necessary for the content analysis of the processes described in this work.

In the most general sense, the term "social transformation" has the following meaning, "the intended and elaborated measure of necessary changes, within which there is a selection of the most significant and promising, an adaptation of society to the changes through the development of programs, projects, goals, technologies and the resolution of contradictions"⁴. Such a definition of the essence of social transformations allows one to see two significant aspects. First, the indication that some characteristics of the current social system are not efficient or useful for the solution of specific problems faced by society as a system. Second, this refers to a combination of desired characteristics of that society that allow one to overcome the presented challenges. Therefore, social transformations in the evolutionary aspect as a form of societal evolution from a less developed to a more developed state. Philosophical analysis of the features of social changes makes it possible to reflect the social and historical development of society. It makes sense that the social and philosophical study should be based on evolutionary and functional principles. According to the former, the progress of society is achieved through complementing and developing the features of the social system that are necessary during a particular historical period. The essence of the functional principle can be seen in the ongoing changes that affect not only the substance of the social system as a whole but also its particular individual areas. Moreover, the first step is the optimization of ideas that determine the changes. The correction of social ideas that any transformations are based on affects their essence. With the engineering approach, the work on ideas eliminates the surplus of resources used, resolves the contradictions between subjects and coordinates their operating principles and prioritizes changes in the areas of social life, thus integrating the logic of material things with the subjective nature of individuals⁵.

Let us present an example with a concept of a post-industrial society by D. Bell⁶ in which the scholar notes that there are four grounds for social changes:

1. The technical and economic sphere the central thesis of which is the law of efficiency (in the work of facilities and economic relations and their interaction);
2. The Marxist nature of property relations used to describe the transition from a pre-industrial to a post-industrial society;
3. The axis of the political and cultural development which are no longer considered elements of the superstructure⁷.

³ S. A. Zubenko, "Transformaciya socialno-ekonomicheskikh sistem: tendencii i factory", Vestnik Tambovskogo universiteta. Seriya: Gumanitarnye nauki Vol: 3 num 71 (2009): 303-308.

⁴ V. Y. Shapovalov, "Rol socialnyh transformacij v processe razvitiya obshchestva", Teoriya i praktika obshchestvennogo razvitiya num 4 (2010): 9-12.

⁵ K. R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

⁶ D. Bell, *The coming of post-industrial society: A venture in social forecasting* (New York: Basic books, Cop, 1973).

⁷ D. Bell, *The coming of post-industrial society: A venture in social forecasting* (New York: Basic books, Cop, 1973).

Within the discourse of humanities and social sciences, it is argued that there are several types of social changes. These changes traditionally include the evolutionary and revolutionary options of societal development, as well as the modernization processes in conjunction with different forms and ways of implementation. To a first approximation, modernization can be characterized as a process of qualitative renewal of society without undermining its integrity, whereby there is a combination of integration and convergence between its structural elements⁸.

Moreover, E.V. Komf distinguishes between two types of modernization: mobilizational and organizational. Mobilizational modernization is labeled a “non-evolutionary process” when the qualitative changes in society and its spheres are the results of forcible directives⁹. One assumes that in such cases of implementing social changes, the use of the potential and resources of society will seem very inefficient and impractical.

E.V. Komf sees the second type of modernization as the evolutionary orientation of the processes of change that entail the qualitative development of society through non-forcible means¹⁰. We believe that optimal management of the resources and openness to dialogue with intellectuals will allow subjects to use society’s potential more efficiently and create new models that meet the challenges of modernity. The essence of the idea of organic modernization can be interpreted as a variant of change through self-renewal of the social system.

Naturally, each of the two options of modernization presented above has its functions and can be applied depending on the situation and the level of society’s awareness of its current development. Thus, in most modern democratic states, the practices of implementing modernizing changes only at the authorities’ initiative are perceived as archaic and do not have massive support among the population. Moreover, we believe that in some cases such practices simply lack the necessary transformational substance. This refers to the cases of social change realization by former socialist states and African countries. In the second half of the 20th century, their implementation of ideas clashed with certain realities, in which the individuals who initiated the reforms mostly ignored their unique context, carried out the conservation of the state of public life spheres less frequently, entering the path of stagnation.

The configuration of ideas embodied in the development of states means their unequal participation in the implementation of social transformations. It must be said that several ideas can be used only for fixing the social transformations that have already taken place but they must be taken into account when forming future development models. Moreover, the same social ideas can be used in most states but their implementation, despite resorting to identical intellectual constructs, will be strictly contextual and unique since subjects will almost certainly use different fragments of ideas.

⁸ N. N. Ravochkin, “Neobhodimost socialno-politicheskoy modernizacii”, *Gorizonty gumanitarnogo znaniya* num 1 (2018): 37-44.

⁹ E. V. Komf, “Organichnaya modernizaciya kak vid socialnoj transformacii”, *Teoriya i praktika obshchestvennogo razvitiya* num 12 (2013).

¹⁰ E. V. Komf, “Organichnaya modernizaciya kak...”

The degree of society's awareness of its spheres allows society to implement regulatory functions regarding the necessary types of relationships¹¹. Ideas as the determinants of social change combine and encapsulate numerous factors. Intellectuals' tasks in the production of efficient social ideas are formulated through a comprehensive description of the totality of obstacles and problems in the development of society and the vision of the future trajectory, taking into account the practical implementation of mental constructs.

Another form of social change is the revolution, by which we mean the sharp and radical unlawful transition of society and its spheres from one qualitative state to another. We believe that it is necessary to distinguish between the concepts of "revolution" and "coup". The content of the latter expresses an unlawful replacement of political circles and elites which may insignificantly affect other areas of social structure. In turn, the "revolution" as an option for the implementation of social changes means not only the unlawful and often violent seizure of power and its transformation in line with the interests of the subjects that obtained it but also the radical nature of the changes that directly affect all spheres of public life.

The described gradation of the radical nature of changes leads to the destruction of not only the political system and its structures but also affects the functioning of institutions that act as supporting structures. Moreover, revolutions affect historical roots and the system of national identity. Considering in detail the varieties of social revolutions, one should note that the revolutions can be not only "political" but also formational and lead to a change in socioeconomic formations. For example, the October Revolution of 1917 led to the replacement of the basic institutions of tsarist Russia with the institutions of Soviet society¹². Geopolitical revolutions alter the existing system of international relations and can also cause states to lose their territorial integrity and even sovereignty. Logically, many theorists and practitioners of the revolution in intellectual history created and embodied the corresponding conceptual ideas.

Therefore, social transformations are realized through an option (or a combination thereof) and always have an ideological basis. The interactions between intellectuals' networks and the transmission of the results of their cognitive activity for social changes must create numerous functional chains wherein some ideas coexist with others.

Some studies indicate that there are four main factors of social development and transformations. These include the interweaving of ideas, rules, actions and interests. Moreover, it is ideas that become the first, basic, factor in the transformation of social connections and relationships. The totality of ideas in the form of definitions, knowledge, methods and forms of proof and argument, beliefs, concepts, etc. makes up the ideal measure of various social structures¹³. As a rule, various centers produce social ideas taking into account the position of subjects that are not nearby but form these intellectual networks.

¹¹ V. P. Shchennikov, *Soznanie kak obshchestvennaya determinanta*: dissertation for Doctor of Philosophical Sciences degree (Yekaterinburg: Ural State University named after A. M. Gorky, 1992).

¹² D. V. Dolenko; E. N. Makshaeva y S. A. Malchenkov, "Revolyucii kak politicheskij fenomen: teoretiko-metodologicheskie aspekty", *Kontensus* Vol: 9 num 74 (2018): 13-22.

¹³ P. Sztompka, *The sociology of social change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

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Due to their axiological foundation and constructivist potential, ideas influence social processes and resonate with various subjects. More advanced forms of ideas supported by an instrumentarium of logical and specific historical proofs of their significance are combined by intellectuals and subjects of social innovations into relevant concepts, programs and theories that provide a “conceptual basis for possible and desired transformations that contains ideas about the essence and main directions of these transformations”¹⁴. It is also important to understand that the same idea can yield different perfect forms depending on the state. Moreover, their identical articulation in practice may mean their substantial remoteness from each other which, however, does not exceed the acceptable limit marking a specific idea as something different from its essence.

Social ideas reflect the desired state of society in the long term while fixing certain parameters that correlate with the normative measurement which contributes to the formation of a certain type of thinking, culture and institutions and determines the multiple interactions between individuals. Ideas can have both direct and indirect effects on the transformations of social systems. However, in practice, the transformation mechanism is usually triggered by concepts, programs and theories within which specific social ideas function and actively influence social processes. Considering the essence of social ideas which is manifested at the individual and collective levels, the subjects of transformations form and structure the interests of social groups and offer motives for achieving their immediate goals. Thus, social practices in various spheres are determined by certain ideas that do not disappear after their implementation but remain in the public consciousness.

Ideological determination is observed even at the level of everyday practices. In particular, the life of an individual fits into the structure of society and its history. Social realities become a kind of background for the practical actions of individuals and since the global world is rapidly transforming, many actions are typified and become ordinary, representing various habitus. In everyday practices, people often face situations that require standardized solutions and by getting used to this state of affairs, people automatically perform the necessary actions.

However, there are cases when individuals face situations that require truly unconventional solutions. In this case, people have to look for new forms and methods of action because unusual situations by default require different patterns of behavior. As a result, the unusual social coordinates of the individual's being are likely to lead them to the conscious need to transform the usual conditions in accordance with the desired ideas. New practices get positive reactions only when, from the perspective of applied social significance, various audiences are convinced of the efficiency, that is, providing applied opportunities for solving the arising problems.

Ideas embedded in the content of personal practices become the basis for their application in social conditions. O.B. Bozhkov provides examples of such practices. This researcher proposes a typology of practices within the framework of the life situation “introduction” in which Bozhkov explains the origin of four types of behavior models in this situation at the junction of two criteria of tradition/innovation and adaptability/mobilization¹⁵.

¹⁴ V. P. Shchennikov, *Soznanie kak obshchestvennaya determinanta*: dissertation for Doctor of Philosophical Sciences degree (Yekaterinburg: Ural State University named after A. M. Gorky, 1992).

¹⁵ O.B. Bozhkov, “Vozmozhnosti socialnyh izmenenij: o primenenii "teorii praktik"”, *Peterburgskaya sociologiya segodnya* num 2 (2010): 195-215.

Interestingly, the change of practices for a particular individual directly depends on how efficient the realized idea of a new way of implementing social actions proves to be.

Today some scholars believe that it is the human activity that forms the historical and social reality¹⁶. The realization of individual ideas determines the subsequent fundamental changes occurring in the spheres of public life. The set of ideas of individuals on improving the implementation of practices at the individual level will inevitably find recognition at the level of groups and collectives, which is achieved through the development of social connections. This gives rise to opportunities for the ideological determination of transformations at the level of society and its spheres. The focus on the views of subjects joining the network facilitates support from other participants and thereby allows setting some general goals in the production of social ideas taking into account the views present in a particular intellectual center. This means that this particular element of individuals' subjective reality determines the principles of human interaction not only immediately and in specific social conditions but also in the short and even long term.

Globalization makes the modern world more open which fosters the active interaction between intelligent networks and social systems as a whole. Moreover, communicative interactions lead to a broad exchange of ideas, their transmission and increase the number of participants in intellectual exchange while positively affecting pluralism in the generation of new social constructs for maintaining the stability of states. We believe that the principles of social structure are consolidated due to their possible current adjustments considering the experience and own realities. The aforementioned engineering approach is focused not on the complete restructuring of the social system but the implementation of predominantly functional transformations and the correlation of spheres as parts with the whole, that is, society.

When it comes to the ideological determination of transformations at the level of social systems and its spheres, the context and aspects of the proposed changes should always be considered. It is fair to speak of technological causes of social development. The essence of technical means due to the apparent functional nature "for the benefit of mankind" can be defined through the ideas that reflect their purpose when created in a specific era. In particular, since the Modern Age, technology has been understood as "the set of all means and actions that relate to any kind of skillful production, primarily to the production of tools and machinery"¹⁷. Then the machinery was categorized as a continuation of the natural capabilities of mankind, and its development was implemented as a form of enhancing mankind's abilities. At least from these ideas, today's technocracy becomes clear and it is understandable why it is impossible to imagine the development of society without technical capabilities. According to A. Bergson's reasoning, due to the development of technology, there is an evolutionary transition from a closed to an open state¹⁸. As a result, new principles appear that form the basis of the relationship between nature and society: life in submission to the laws of nature and submission of nature to man.

¹⁶ I. Shubrt, "Problema socialnyh izmenenij v perspektive teorii Entoni Giddensa", Zhurnal sociologii i socialnoj antropologii Vol: 15 num 6 (2012): 232-241.

¹⁷ L. S. Perevozchikova y M. V. Chernikov, "Razvitie tekhniki kak istoriko-kulturnyj fenomen", Nauchnye vedomosti Belgorodskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Seriya: Filosofiya. Sociologiya. Pravo Vol: 16 num 187 (2014): 17-29.

¹⁸ H. Bergson, Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion (Paris: F. Alcan, 1932).

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Coming back to D. Bell's concept¹⁹, one can also see that the presented ideas of technology predetermine the development of society from an industrial type to a post-industrial one. Moreover, ideas are involved that are even embedded in the processes of designing technical innovations that defined the advanced functionality of specific devices that determine the onset of the postindustrial stage of development²⁰. However, in this case, a transition to globalization also seems logical whereas in past systems of social interactions it seemed simply impossible. Ideas can also determine economic, political and legal changes. As for the latter, we say that constitutional values are the fundamental principles and norms of a general nature, enshrine the priorities for the development of social relations. Such values are nothing more than the implementation of the ideas that, for example, a democratic form of government is based on. One of the key ideas here is the idea of the alternation of power. The meaning and value of the idea of the alternation of power are to ensure stability and subsequent efficiency through adjustments to the policy. We believe it is impossible to ensure the successful functioning of bureaucratic communications in the state leadership within the unlimited period of performance of official political duties by government entities. Since this is very likely to lead to the impossibility of introducing new ideas due to the typification of practices by political entities elected for such a period, it will also prevent the opinion of many interested groups from being considered²¹. It is easy to find such confirmations in the history of authoritarian and especially totalitarian states. On the other hand, during a certain set period, political elites can govern the state much more successfully. There is no doubt that the limited period of governing is justified, unless the goal of the subjects of power is to diminish fundamental rights and freedoms, as well as grossly violate constitutional principles.

Conclusion

Therefore, the ideas of implementing transformations today are embedded in various social subsystems and this positively labels meaningful transformations. Any social changes entail the presence of certain intellectual structures that subjects strive to implement while sometimes facing disagreement from opponents of transformations. Finally, the meaning of social transformations is not to blindly transfer certain successful practices but to prepare and thoroughly develop ideas for one's realities.

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²⁰ V. V. Kokorin, "Socialnye transformacii: postanovka problem", *Vestnik Moskovskogo gosudarstvennogo oblastnogo universiteta. Seriya: Filosofskie nauki* num 4 (2019): 74-82.

²¹ A. A. Kondrashev, "Smenyaemost vlasti kak konstitucionnaya cennost", *Rossijskij juridicheskij zhurnal* Vol: 3 num 108 (2016): 90-99.

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