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## The Influence of the Information Society Development on Political Ideologies

### The Main Body of the Research

There are many points of view in the scientific literature regarding the definition of the concept of political ideology, its tasks, and functions. American sociologist Neil Smelser substantiates the understanding of ideology as a system of theoretical knowledge, affirming certain values and facts. First, the functions of ideology are to ease the social tension that arises when people are aware of the differences between their values and the real conditions of their lives. In other words, ideology aims to obscure the contradiction between the idea of equal opportunities for each citizen and reality, when some social groups and individuals are worse off than others<sup>1</sup>. Second, ideologies protect the interests of certain social groups, and they have to, by virtue of their status, justify the existing state of affairs (conservative types of ideology) or, conversely, fight for its abolition (radical types of ideology). Third, ideologies can give meaning and legitimacy to people's actions and demands. Ultimately, ideologies are a means of identifying personal and group norms and values concerning which citizens are taking action.

German philosopher Erich Fromm defines ideology as follows: "Ideologies are ideas formulated for the public's needs that satisfy the expectations of each person to alleviate the conscience by believing that it works for something, probably, the good and the desirable. Ideology is a ready-made 'thought-product' distributed by the press, speakers, ideologists in order to manipulate the masses of people

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<sup>1</sup> N. Smelser, *Sociology*, Prentice Hall, New Jersey 1991, p. 132.

for purposes that have nothing to do with ideology, and often even the exact opposite...”<sup>2</sup>.

Structurally, ideology consists of three elements: the image of reality (what is happening in a particular society and beyond); the axiological system (hierarchy of values); the practical guidance (methodologies for changing or maintaining the current state of affairs). The functions of socio-political doctrines are to determine the political course, strategy, tactics of parties, and, to some extent, the electoral behavior of citizens.

The transformations political ideologies are undergoing raise a number of topical and interesting issues for researchers. What role do ideas and images play in the symbolic space of politics at the present stage? Why does the issue of the end of ideology arise again? To put it another way: will imageology replace ideology? We have set ourselves the aim of responding to these questions by appealing to the widespread idea of the information society.

First of all, let us try to uncover the phenomenon of “information society”, a synonym (and consequence) of which may be “post-industrial society”. As for the information society phenomenon, researchers generally agree that recognizing it as something radically new and revolutionary is inappropriate. Well-known British sociologist Christopher May uses the following statements as the criteria for analyzing the onset of a new era:

- we are going through a social revolution;
- the organization of economic relations has undergone a transformation;
- changing political practice with the societies where it is applied;
- the state with its power is finally declining<sup>3</sup>.

There is no doubt that qualitative changes to these criteria have taken place. But the question is whether they have a global character. The analysis made by May is skeptical of the idea of the information society.

As Daniel Bell pointed out in *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting*, industrial change will be characterized by a change in the definition of knowledge as such. The priority of theory over empiricism and the generalization of knowledge in the form of abstract systems of symbols ... determined the nature of changes in theoretical knowledge<sup>4</sup>. So, we can identify the following changes:

- first, in the post-industrial society, the central place is occupied by professionals;
- secondly, classes and groups give way to the individual as the owner and user of knowledge – the individualism of the post-industrialism era is replacing the collectivism of the industrial age, and the role of the individual and his communication potential is enhanced;

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<sup>2</sup> E. Fromm, *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, Holt Paperbacks, New York 1992, p. 287.

<sup>3</sup> C. May, *Global Corporate Power*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder 2006, p. 321.

<sup>4</sup> D. Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting*, Basic Books, New York 1976, p. 229.

- in politics, the focus is on the individual, and personal image becomes of great importance.

One can disagree with Alvin Toffler's view that the information society is a radical change, a complex transformation of industrial society. With the advent of information technology, only one other form of information (electronic exchange) has emerged, leading to certain social changes<sup>5</sup>. As Christopher May noted, the world is changing, but more under the pressure of new technologies than under the influence of the laws of development<sup>6</sup>.

With regard to the statement that the organization of economic relations has undergone a transformation, the situation is then similar. Capitalism was and is still the dominant form of economic relations.

In *Capital*, Karl Marx argues that industrial production under capitalism never regards its present form as finite and is always aimed at perfection. That is why technological upheavals in production indicate its updating, not a rejection of it. The main goal of the entrepreneur is to make a profit (and it is bigger if the money is exchanged faster). However, it is logical that the main factor in reducing the period of money circulation, or, in other words, the circulation of capital, will be the improvement of means of communication<sup>7</sup>.

In addition, the development of communication media that has led to the phenomenon of the information society is linked to the idea of a revolution in control (the ability to receive instant feedback). These technologies have helped to improve the effectiveness of economic managers' control. Significant changes that have taken place in the economic sphere include:

- the driving force of the economy is no longer a social group (class) but an extensive network of individuals: there is a division of labor based on a contractual system as opposed to long-term employment;
- there was a transformation of information and knowledge that used to be part of the specialists' work and existed as "hidden knowledge" on the goods – the share of information goods and services that have replaced material goods has increased significantly.

Another statement that is interesting in the context of our study is that the state, with its power, is finally declining. Indeed, multinational corporations, or the more commonly used term transnational corporations (TNCs), which can be seen as both a cause and a consequence of the development of information technology, have been successfully used by these technologies to build international or even global networks. As a result, supranational systems of production emerge, and borders between countries have lost their importance. A sad consequence for nation-states is the loss of control over such corporations since the latter are able to avoid tax policies and government regulation. Powerful TNCs connected to the global network

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<sup>5</sup> A. Toffler, *Powershift: Knowledge, Wealth, and Power at the Edge of the 21st Century*, Bantam Books, New York 1991, p. 364.

<sup>6</sup> C. May, *Global Corporate...*, op. cit., p. 325.

<sup>7</sup> K. Marx, *Capital*, Wordsworth Editions, Ware 2013, p. 783.

have begun to accelerate the process of revitalizing international capital mobility. They made instantaneous capital transfers and made tracking them as difficult as ever, which undermined state power. For example, using tax havens for multinationals to “hide” profits could cost poor countries up to \$50 billion.

In this situation, however, there is a key to the fact that the role of the state has not been reduced to marginal. After all, the state can either create or eliminate such “tax havens” through the regulation of legislation. And, in general, TNCs can only spread and function in countries where clear legal boundaries are set (another thing is that they have the power to influence the legislative process). The state as a “night watchman” becomes an important condition for the existence of MNCs, so the idea of further decline of the state seems groundless.

Therefore, it can be said that, in general, post-industrial society differs from industrial society in the concept of the “welfare state”, which was implemented and had the following consequences:

- the middle class in developed societies is the largest social stratum: as a result, Western society has become roughly homogeneous by social criterion;
- the success of the idea and practice of the “welfare state” has led to the undisputed “victory” of capitalism over other forms of social organization.

In fact, capitalism is becoming an alternative. It is transformed into an ideology of the whole world community. The homogeneity of society, or, in other words, the absence of division by social criterion, is the condition and cause of differentiation at the individual level. This can be seen in the evolution of the notion of solidarity. Emile Durkheim’s organic solidarity gives way to Richard Rorty’s solidarity. As Durkheim noted, solidarity has the essential function of making the individual an integral part of the whole and, accordingly, absorbing some of his freedom of action. Contrary to such a definition, a modern understanding of solidarity implies that solidarity is not collectivism<sup>8</sup>. Instead, solidarity defines the individual as a person acting consciously and independently<sup>9</sup>. The ontological status of solidarity is evidenced not by the fact that a person is capable of mutual assistance but rather by the fact that he or she organically needs to act voluntarily to create a common public good through inter-organized groups, communities, and associations of citizens.

Having identified the fundamental changes in society, we can use them as criteria for the current state and prospects for the development of political ideologies.

#### 1. Negative or critical:

- holistic unified belief systems that dictate to individuals the way they think and behave;
- the basis of collective action mobilization;
- false ideas used to legitimize existing order and/or mobilization of actions directed in its stead;
- false consciousness masking the true state of things.

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<sup>8</sup> E. Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, Free Press, New York 1997, p. 76.

<sup>9</sup> R. Rorty, *Philosophical Papers Set*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2007, p. 154.

## 2. Positive or neutral:

- ideas systems that offer a definite assessment of an existing project, its design changes, and an appropriate program of action;
- ideas and beliefs that reflect the interests and attitudes of certain social groups;
- methods of ordering and interpreting social reality.

Consequently, understanding the concept of ideology has evolved from interpreting it as a system of ideas and beliefs of a particular social group to recognizing political ideology as a system of symbols that forms in the so-called “maps” or “matrix” of social reality.

Obviously, this position is caused not least by the fact that at the present stage, the emphasis is not on the social group but on the individual. That is why Karl Mannheim’s definition of ideology loses its meaning. If the modern era formed ideologies according to class, national, or territorial characteristics, then a socially homogeneous society chooses one or another ideology according to individual preferences or interests<sup>10</sup>.

The problem of the end of ideology is rising again. The problem is that the normative values of modernity, being fully embodied, have come true, that is, transformed from transcendental utopian goals to the characteristic of immanent political reality here and now. Therefore, the titanic efforts, which today are directed to support the Enlightenment project and underpin its great ideologies, testify to the exhaustion of the modernist ideological discourses. Having found their historical and cultural borderline in the post-industrial information society, they seem to have been unable to effectively explain and legitimize the reality of the postmodern world. If we use the division of Mannheim’s ideology into partial and total, it can be noted that the total ideology of postmodernism comes to replace the modern ideology of modernism, which we regard as the end of ideology. There is a decline of great ideologies and the formation of a new disciplinary matrix. The peculiarity of such a matrix is that ideology as a form of description detaches from the order of the universal without trying to build an objective picture of the world and the monopoly on the truth that follows from it. The result of the recognition of the non-universality of political ideologies was the elimination of their rulemaking function. Value ideologies are transformed into applied political technologies.

The consequence is that for the purpose of populism, antagonistic axioms (values) of classical ideologies are mixed. Here again, neologism such is exemplified, reflecting the impossibility for the modern times of combating pure ideologies of combining right-wing economic policy with left-wing political rhetoric (in fact, a left-centrist party pursuing an economic policy that supports the idea of minimal intervention into the economic and social spheres).

As the criteria for individuals’ attachment to particular ideologies become extremely subjective or blurred, the problem of political manipulation becomes particularly relevant.

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<sup>10</sup> K. Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, Martino Fine Books, Eastford 2015, p. 223.

In conclusion, it is worth presenting two schemes-vectors, reflecting fundamental changes in the normative-symbolic sphere of politics.

In the modern era, the following algorithm was used for the formation of normative-symbolic products (ideologies): group identification (source of production of intellectual products) → group interest (object of symbolic reflection) → ideology (an ideal matrix, meaningfully representing a rationally grouped system of political groups) → ideological struggle (condition of formation of basic values and metacodes ensuring stability and integration of society) → ideologists (central stratum of production of ideal policy sphere) → parties (the main elements of the system of representation) → attitude of the ruling elite and civil society (the main contractors of public policy) → political democracy (institutional sector regulatory organizations symbolic sphere and political discourse).

For the postmodern era, such a transformation of the basic components of the sphere of politics and the normative-symbolic sphere took place: individual and cultural identification of the mass society (emphasis on the individual in a homogeneous society) → informational reason (objective or not objective if it is political misinformation) → advertising (built on the emotional, sensual and cultural dimensions of the image concentrated position) → political directing (as a form of conscious assurance of political stability and public interest) → political technologies → techno-telemedias (electronic media) → the relationship of deocracy (persons who control the exchange of information with the mass society) → post-democracy (infocracy).

## Conclusions

The information society, which by itself does not bring radical changes, has caused significant, even global, consequences in the regulatory and symbolic sphere of politics. Scholars hold different views on the future of political ideologies (end-ideology theory, cyclical ideology theory). But there is one thing that is certain: there is a process of displacement of ideology into the political periphery, which testifies to the extinction of its function of forming the normative-symbolic sphere.

It should be emphasized that the information society, in the course of its development, will continue to develop the consciousness of the active part of society regardless of the wishes of its members. Political organizations will only achieve results with the development of ideological work, which will understand the realities of the present and pave the way for the future. Today, the development of ideological activity as a basis for the development of modern political processes is necessary, based on:

- the specific tasks of a global society;
- national interests in global development;
- the concrete transformation of these interests into applied tasks of development of society can fulfill and is guaranteed to achieve real success, which will

become an economic base, socially controlled, not stolen, with mechanisms of social accountability in use, for further restoration of perspective directions of the national economy.

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## The Influence of the Information Society Development on Political Ideologies

### Abstract

National development today, on the one hand, stimulates, first and foremost, the instinct for the self-preservation of nations and the resistance to unification. On the other hand, it facilitates free access to information and communication opportunities between like-minded people in the field of national development provided by modern information technologies. Information society influences political ideologies, including values, a set of discursive-creative ideas and views, which, in a theoretical and more or less systematic form, include people's attitude to life in the information society and to one another and serve to consolidate, develop, or change relations in society, which is called information society. The development of the information society must cultivate such laws or maxims of history that influence the course of events in society, linked to the latest trends in the development of political ideologies that are determined by information technologies.

**Słowa kluczowe:** ideologia, społeczeństwo informacyjne, rozwój społeczny, nowe technologie

**Key words:** ideology, information society, social development, new technologies

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