NETOCRACY AS A SUBJECT OF THE MODERN INFORMATION SOCIETY

A NETOCRACIA COMO TEMA DA MODERNA SOCIEDADE DA INFORMAÇÃO

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This article examines the study of issues related to the formation of the information society, with a primary focus on the emerging new ruling class – the netocracy. It reveals some features and characteristics of this developing global upper class. The article discusses approaches to analyzing the information society, its network structure, and the place of netocracy within the post-industrial society, which possesses knowledge and technologies for managing people's behavior and their organizations.

Results and Discussion: The netocracy is set to gain dominance in the future information society due to its mastery of information and ability to handle it. Owing to its central position in information networks, the monopoly on knowledge of network organizations, and the ability to use this knowledge to manage people, the netocracy becomes a class dominating the information society.

Conclusion: An overabundance of information leads to the netocracy, which can manage information and use it to generate exclusive knowledge, becoming the meritocracy of a post-industrial society. The exclusive position of the netocracy within the meta-information space, as well as its ability and competence to systematically shape the meta-information sphere, makes it a driving force in the development of a post-industrial information society. However, despite the crisis-stricken state of modern capitalist society and the bourgeoisie's inability to find a solution to the system-wide crisis, the netocracy has not yet acquired the necessary

resource base to emerge as a dominant and ruling force.

Keywords: Netocracy; Network; Power; Information; Meritocracy; Global Internet.

RESUMO

Objetivo: Este artigo examina o estudo de questões relacionadas à formação da sociedade da informação, com foco principal na nova classe dominante emergente - a netocracia. Ele revela alguns recursos e características dessa classe alta global em desenvolvimento. O artigo discute abordagens para analisar a sociedade da informação, sua estrutura de rede e o lugar da netocracia na sociedade pós-industrial, que possui conhecimento e tecnologias para gerenciar o comportamento das pessoas e suas organizações.

Resultados e discussão: A netocracia deve ganhar domínio na futura sociedade da informação devido ao seu domínio das informações e à sua capacidade de lidar com elas. Devido à sua posição central nas redes de informação, ao monopólio do conhecimento das organizações de rede e à capacidade de usar esse conhecimento para gerenciar pessoas, a netocracia se torna uma classe dominante na sociedade da informação.

Conclusão: Uma superabundância de informações leva à netocracia, que pode gerenciar informações e usá-las para gerar conhecimento exclusivo, tornando-se a meritocracia de uma sociedade pós-industrial. A posição exclusiva da netocracia no espaço da meta-informação, bem como sua capacidade e competência para moldar sistematicamente a esfera da meta-informação, faz dela uma força motriz no desenvolvimento de uma sociedade da informação pós-industrial. Entretanto, apesar do estado de crise da sociedade capitalista moderna e da incapacidade da burguesia de encontrar uma solução para a crise do sistema como um todo, a netocracia ainda não adquiriu a base de recursos necessária para emergir como uma força dominante e governante.

Palavras-chave: Netocracia; Rede; Poder; Informação; Meritocracia; Internet global.

1 INTRODUCTION

The development of modern society constantly reproduces a long-standing dispute of technocrats and anti-technocrats. The former zealously defend the advantages of the new post-industrial society, the latter - no less convincingly point out the negative consequences of the scientific and technological revolution. The study of post-industrial society is inextricably linked with the problem of its driving forces, social structure and organization of people's life activities.

Netocracy is a term coined by the editorial board of the American technology magazine Wired in the early 1990s. Netocracy is the power of the network, the power of information, the power of knowledge. It would be more accurate to say: power over the network, power over information, and the possession of great knowledge - all this should turn the netocracy into the highest elite of the information society.

The concept of netocracy was presented systematically and comprehensively (2000) in the work of two Swedish researchers - Alexander Bard, the sociologist and cyberphilosophist and Jan Soderqvist, the writer and journalist: "Netocracy – The New Power Elite and Life after Capitalism" (the book was published in Russian in 2004) (Bard & Soderqvist, 2002).

In the information age, it is often noted that whoever owns information owns the world. However, information itself, without appropriate communication, without appropriate information promotion technologies, without a certain structured and organized system, namely the system of promotion, dissemination, storage and exchange of information, can change little in the organization and management of social relations. It is the technologies of using information that are able to manage, mobilize, unite and organize the masses (Volodenkov, 2018). This is the basis of the meta-information space or meta-information sphere. Moreover, it was the technological revolutions that contributed to the development of human civilization. Marshall McLuhan statement that "a means is a message" has been interpreted by many scholars of his writings as meaning that the process of transmitting information is no less, and even more important, for the characterization of historical time and the interaction of subjects with each other. Technologies determine the mentality of communication subjects. Sometimes this expression is interpreted as follows: the means/source of communication is the message. Thus, the technology of receiving and distributing information has determined the dominant methods of communication: oral, printed and electronic.

One of the varieties of electronic Internet technology is communication network. By definition of M. Castells (2011),

> A network is a set of interconnected nodes that form a global information structure. The network structure of society leads to the formation of a new form of communication – mass self-communication – and with the advent of new

technologies, any individual with access to the global network can build their own information system using Internet and mobile communication products. (p. 234).

In some ways, this performance can be compared by analogy with the famous speakers' place in London's Hyde Park, where everyone can speak and spread their ideas. Only today the network has a global dimension and this allows to distribute information to a large number of people around the world, and instantly.

Representatives of Netocracies are closely related to mass media. They form a kind of virtual communities, using the network structure of the Internet as a means of communication and creating social connections, are legislators of a lifestyle, a certain style, recognized as the most appropriate to the emerging system of social relations. Of course, netocracy can achieve all this only by implementing its information, communication and media capabilities resources. Netocracy shows its leading role through the creation of its own Internet resource and constant work with its followers, where the confirming motto of its activity should be: "Attention-Awareness – Authenticity".

2 METHODS

As a methodological basis for the study, the work includes the following approaches and methods: system and structural-functional approaches, which made it possible to determine its role in the modern information society. Sociological, logical and comparative methods allowed determining the state and dynamics of the development of this institute. The analysis of historical conditions and factors influencing the place and role of netocracy in the modern world revealed its significance and place in Russia.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The multinational Internet company GOOGLE is one of the most famous search engines, processing a huge amount of information and making recommendations for search queries. A study conducted by The Wall Street Journal (2019) showed that Google

uses special algorithms to manage the selection of the required data. For example, when you enter "Donald Trump" in the search bar, the system prompts, or rather independently continues to suggest, different options for ending the phrase to different people (Zuykova, 2020). The same can be said for FACEBOOK and AMAZON.

In addition, a certain pattern was revealed: the vast majority of users experience something like conformism when publishing their content. They are not inclined to make judgments that run counter to social norms and stereotypes. The situation described above occurs Noel Neumann as a "spiral of silence", when the lack of alternatives leads to a unification of views and a significant change in people's behavior (Lyasko, 2017). And in this situation, there is no doubt that the role of netocracy as an opinion leader can activate people's cognitive and behavioral reactions.

In Russia, at the present stage of the formation of the information society, its own netocracy is being formed. Modern Russian blogging an emerging and fast-growing phenomenon. Often the blogger acts as a source of the most reliable and independent information. It is noted that a new leadership group has recently emerged: influencers, who, thanks to their professionalism, compete with traditional media. Their influence on consumer behavior is becoming quite noticeable, and the next step can be taken towards influencing beliefs and political behavior. The "smart voting" proposed at the elections had a significant resonance in the political life of Russia. Yuri Dudy's films "Kolyma" and "Beslan. Remember" (All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center, 2020; Burrel, 2003). Modern Internet users are faced with the problem of an overabundance of information. The ability to rank necessary information from unnecessary information requires appropriate professional knowledge and the ability to analyze information from the point of view of its objectivity and reliability. In some ways, this is similar to the status role of the brahmana in Ancient India (the Brahmans were the highest caste of ancient Indian society), when only initiated and initiated people are able to carry out the necessary activities. The elite of bourgeois society does not possess such knowledge, but the netocracydoes. And most importantly, she is clearly aware of this. Thus, the netocracy, having knowledge of the structure and technologies of social networks, the laws of information and communication, is able to offer as a basis the following advantages: the exclusivity of their professional knowledge, but also the ability to attract and win the

attention of people. It is these qualities that can raise the netocracy to an unprecedented height and make it the ruling class of the information society.

So, in the future, at the top will be the netocrats, who can attract attention with their knowledge and connections, and at the bottom the old ruling class-the bourgeoisie and the new lower class-the consumtariat (from the English to consume — to consume), who will be offered information garbage and advertising that regulates and encourages their consumption. Netocrates makes himself! It is impossible to become a netocrat by inheritance! Only those who are able to curb the global information network and learn to manage new emerging forms of communication, inherit power on Earth. This is how Swedish researchers present netocracy and its future.

The source of netocracy power is related to the management of behavior models, which could be generated by new material technology. A crucial private conclusion follows from this definition. The more the material technology that produces new patterns of behavior changes, the higher the level of power and wealth is not necessarily accurate. Today in Russia, as in many other countries, there is a "mediatization" of politics, "fragmentation" of political consciousness, and politics acquires features of a pointless show, becoming another product of mass consumption.

In the context of Russia, another trend is also noticeable, which can be referred to as the politicization of the media. This is expressed, primarily, in the fact that real policy is replaced by substitute goals. Mass protest becomes as pointless as it is useless. Nowadays, authorities often use the tactic of deliberately releasing false messages into the media and blogosphere, which, even if later disproven, produce the necessary propaganda or counter-propaganda effect.

Today, the participation of media personalities in politics is becoming the norm. Barack Obama actively used social media to win the US presidential election in 2008 (García-Orosa, 2021; Mathaisel & Comm, 2021; Sevin, 2021). Vladimir Zelensky, being a candidate for president of Ukraine, actively used Instagram, and Donald Trump's use of Twitter contributed to his victory as President of the United States (Minot et al., 2021). In Russia, media personalities have repeatedly become deputies of the State Duma (deputies of DG 7 and 8 convocations of P.O. Tolstoy and E.V. Revenko).

But does this indicate the dominant position of the netocracy in resource allocation, policy setting, and decision-making? I think the answer to all these questions will be negative. Netocracy, of course, today has great opportunities to determine the agenda and influence social processes. But this does not turn it into the highest elite stratum of society, much less the ruling class (Fatykhova et al., 2019). Perhaps it will gradually gain these positions. However, even today one can see the political influence of the netocracy. So, disconnecting U.S. President D. Trump from Twitter was a clear demonstration of the growing power and power of netocracy. At the same time, some trends in the modern development of mass media and information technologies suggest the opposite. Demassovization of mass media contributes to the individualization and atomization of social networks. This process should expand the number of opinion leaders (curators), but it is unlikely to lead to a centralized and concentrated model of social media management. This means that the most important function of netocracy - active influence on the behavior and impact on the value system of consumers-will not be implemented.

4 CONCLUSION

Lev Manovich formulated a necessary condition for domination in the modern information society: "The one who will rule the world is the one who learns to use statistics - looking at trends, data sets, rather than scattered data" (Generalova, 2020). The ability to think analytically, adopt a creative approach to solving modern social problems, gain experience working in social networks, respond inventively to contemporary challenges, and exhibit leadership through the establishment of specific norms and stereotypes of consciousness and behavior for followers are qualities that can make non-democracy the driving force of the information society.

Today, we cannot predict the exact nature of the social system that will replace capitalism. However, we can outline some criteria for such a transition. The future society will be democratic and egalitarian (Wallerstein, 1999, p. 8). This is supported by the entire history of human development. Moreover, it is challenging for people today to envision a

future that is not a direct continuation of the present; hence, the idea that the future could be entirely different is rather radical.

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