Trends in Social Transformations in the Discourse of Building the Information Society

Tendencias de las transformaciones sociales en el discurso de la construcción de la sociedad de la información

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ABSTRACT

The main goal of the empirical study was to study the possibilities of managing the process of levelling the negative consequences of social transformations of the social structure of modern Russian society in the information context. The empirical base is represented by the results of a sociological survey conducted in the northern territories of Russia by interviewing representatives of the social stratum, which in the long term of building the information society should disappear – low-income families. The study used a secondary analysis of the data of fundamental sociological research.

Keywords: Information inequality; information wars; leveling social polarization; social inequality.

RESUMEN

El objetivo principal del estudio empírico fue estudiar las posibilidades de gestionar el proceso de nivelación de las consecuencias negativas de las transformaciones sociales de la estructura social de la sociedad rusa moderna en el contexto de la información. La base empírica está representada por los resultados de una encuesta ociológica realizada en los territorios del Norte de Rusia por los representantes del estrato social, que a largo plazo de la construcción de la sociedad de la información debe desaparecer - familias con pocos recursos. El estudio se utilizó un análisis secundario de los datos fundamentales de la investigación sociológica.

Palabras clave: Desigualdad en la información; guerras de información; nivelación de la polarización social; desigualdad social.

INTRODUCTION

Among the many challenges to the humanity of the 21st century, researchers, identify the threat of information security as the most important threat, putting it at one level with the problems of ecology, energy, etc. The situation is aggravated by the fact that the hurricane development and introduction of modern information and telecommunication technologies entailed a new stage of economic and scientific and technical progress in a very short time span, and therefore a significant step towards the development of human civilization as a whole.

Modern Russian society is characterized by the growing role of the information environment, which includes the entire set of various sources of information, infrastructure, entities that collect, form, provide and use information, as well as a set of systems regulating social relations. As the role of information grows literally in all spheres of life of modern society, there is a direct need to analyze the extent of its penetration, as well as its influence on the processes (both positive and negative) that take place in society.

Countries that are the most active in creating and developing the information industry certainly become the most successful in the field of transformation and economic growth. This is what determines a new stage in the development of states, with their renewed society, which has become known as the "information society". Influence of information on modern power structures whose activities are not possible without its collection, storage and distribution. The article examines the main trends in the development of modern Russia and the construction of a new information society, as well as its impact on social processes.

Modern Russia is experiencing changes that can dramatically change not only social being, but also cause social and economic transformations. Today, society experiencing a breakdown of traditional, habitual and established stereotypes of public consciousness does not have formed and universally recognized social interests. Studies show that this is due to underdeveloped communication systems, in particular, information systems, which strongly influences the activity of citizens and their participation in the political, economic and social transformations of society, which necessitates the creation of such a mechanism that would allow for effective management of social systems based on the use of information technology.

Russia is actively involved in the information space of the world; since its own experience in managing the information society is not yet great, it is necessary for the subjects of management to review and rethink classical management models. In this regard, at the state level, indicators of the effectiveness of power structures have been developed, to implement which, understanding of the management of social systems had to be radically changed (Zatuliveter, 2001). Introduction of such indicators for individual social systems has become quite painful since they required a deep rethinking and restructuring of the individual development trajectory. However, their introduction clearly showed the need to create a single all-Russian monitoring system based on indicators of management effectiveness of social systems.

The emergence of separate expert systems in the field of public administration and the widespread use of information technology in the field of social systems and public administration, as well as in the information and analytical services of the state apparatus, which is used in making managerial decisions, does not mean the systematic use of information technologies and the widespread expansion and introduction (Mironov and Pashuta, 2010). Awareness of the need for their application at all levels and in various social systems by the state and society exists, however, it is necessary to note the disparate goals and autonomy of their use. The desire of the state to build an institution of public administration on the basis of the use of information technologies is a priority task of searching for optimal ways of development of modern Russian society. The task is extremely complicated because Russian society is subject to deep transformational processes affecting its essential characteristics, to which the social structure belongs. Most researchers treat social transformation as a process of structural changes in the social status as changes in the entire social system, including all its components. To distinguish social groups, variables were used that, for a number of characteristics, allowed identifying a particular social group quite reliably. Thus, for example, the intelligentsia group (the intellectual

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class) was distinguished on the grounds of education, qualifications, the nature of work and the level of well-being (Lyshova, 2001). To avoid overlapping of several groups identified by different criteria, the researchers used indicators on which their hierarchy was established: participation in business, participation in management, physical or mental work, social and sectoral work (management, industry, agriculture, commerce, social sphere, and services), level of education and qualification. This selection of indicators is based not only on the establishment of the social status of the respondents but also on the extent to which they influence the transformation processes. A working hypothesis of T.I. Zaslavskaya on the four strata of Russian society – upper, middle, base (below the middle) and lower, allows relating them to the following elements of the structure: the upper stratum – the elite (economic and political), large and medium-sized entrepreneurs, highest bureaucracy, generals, directors of large enterprises. The middle class includes small entrepreneurs, managers, business people, and intelligentsia. The base stratum includes representatives of the semi-intelligentsia, trade and service professions, high-skill level workers and peasants. The lower stratum is characterized by workers with low qualification, employees, hardcore poor. The researchers note that neither the upper stratum nor the lowest one falls into the survey base (Zaslavskaya, 2003).

The above factors, which influence stratification, are not finally established (Lezhnina, 2010). The dynamics of development, the processes of globalization of the modern world are increasing the scale of the influence of information on the forming systems of social transformation. The role of information in the society and its ubiquitous informatization is growing so much that extrapolating the rate of this growth gives grounds for asserting a qualitative change in the nature of social development. V. Mudrykh, speaking of the high degree of development of information and computer technologies, suggests "the formation of a real superintelligence". N.N. Moiseev argues that the collective intellect (collective intelligence) acts as a regulator of society. At the same time, there is an opinion that allows his supporters to assume that the laws of social development will be replaced by information laws that will fulfil the functions of self-regulation of social systems (Zaslavskaya, 1977).

The shift in the importance of individual resources of the economy towards scientific knowledge and information resources means that the whole structure of modern society begins to be reconstructed. At the same time, restructuring is proceeding in the direction of creating conditions in the society that allow us to work with information in full force.

The process of stratification in Russian society looks like a phenomenon of a sociocultural split, where the conflict social strata play the key role of social conflict (Zaslavskaya, 2003).

S.A. Dyatlov writes in his work "Principles of Information Society": "In modern conditions, scientific knowledge and information resources are the most important resource of the economy. The public significance of a person is increasingly determined not only by the availability of traditional goods, production conditions or money (capitals) but, above all, the availability of information resources, scientific knowledge, and information, social status. In modern society, the social value is increasingly identified with the information value." (Dyatlov, 2000).

METHODOLOGY

The object of research is the social transformations of modern Russian society, the subject is the management of the negative consequences of modern transformation in the information society.

The empirical basis was the sociological study of one of the social strata of modern society, which, in the concept of the information society of E. Toffler and other sociologists-futurists, should be minimized, in particular, by the unprotected stratum of the population in the northern territories (the example of Noyabrsk). The study was conducted by interviewing representatives of low-income families. The sample population was 844 people, that is, 16.7% of the total population (4,400 people). The population of the city of Noyabrsk is

110,000 people, of which 4.6% are officially recognized poor in 2011. And since according to the norms accepted in sociological practice, a sample that is 3-5% of the general population is already recognized, a survey of 16.7% of the population is more than enough to prove representativeness (Rodionova and Bogdanova, 2014).

The purpose of our sociological research was to determine the specifics of poverty in the northern region, to identify the problems faced by the poor to develop an organizational and management mechanism for their solution.

The units of the study were families that at the time of the survey were low-income, that is, they have income below the subsistence minimum per capita established in the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District. During the survey, respondents were interviewed who, at the time of the study, had the official status of needy (low-income), recognized their need, applied for state aid, confirmed its necessity and received assistance.

Secondary analysis of the data presented in the VCIOM (Russian Public Opinion Research Centre) research, whose goal was to study the social structure that is the basis of the transformation process, is another method for investigating the problem analyzed. At the same time, much attention was paid not only to studying one or another category of citizens but also to studying the influence of this stratum on the transformational processes as a whole, their role in institutional transformations. One category of citizens is characterized by the most successful adaptation to a constantly changing environment that can influence changes and adjust them, while the second category is those citizens who cannot influence the ongoing processes (that is why they are not subjects but objects) of fundamental changes in society. To see the dynamics and trace the transformations taking place in the social environment of our society, as well as to reveal the underlying causes that influence the processes of changing social stratification, we considered it logical to turn to the academic studies of modern sociologists.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Today, the information society is replacing the post-industrial society, which represents a natural stage in the technogenic history of the development of society. Its essence lies in the fact that any subject of a given society at any time and in any place can obtain the necessary information (personal or socially significant). And this means having such a wide infrastructure of information systems that ensures the development of society. This system, in turn, is capable of producing scientific information, forming an environment where communication networks and information technologies develop freely, thereby "pushing" the society to a single information space. In this situation, scientists talk about the formation of a new intellectual technology. In this case, for each subject of the same generation access to information is not the same, which generates such a social phenomenon as information inequality. This phenomenon is quite understandable for our country: large territorial dispersion, geographical distance of separate territories from administrative, economic and political centres and main communication channels, different financial possibilities of the population. Since the solution of this problem directly depends on the economic component, the solvency of the population in rural areas, even with technical projects being solved, the problem is not solvable. Here it is especially necessary to note the conservatism of the older generation, for the most part not motivated to master computer technologies. And, despite the desire of individual regions to eliminate this gap, the desire to overcome their own laziness, or simply fear of something new, is irresistible. (For example, in the Tyumen region there is a program of the Governor to increase the computer literacy of the population "Expanding Horizons", within which about 50 thousand pensioners learned computer literacy).

The other side of social inequality caused by the introduction of new value orientations in society and the shifting of the old ones is the erasure of the borders of the middle class, which arises from the insufficient qualification of the majority of representatives of this stratum (insufficient level of education, its depreciation).

And, at the same time, there is a "ruling class" – holders of knowledge and technologies that form the information environment. And here it should be noted that there is a category that fundamentally rejects everything new, considering innovations a priori a harmful phenomenon, corrupting youth, corrupting public consciousness, which affects the social structure and social stratification.

Such information inequality has the most negative impact on the interrelations of different generations, exacerbates social tension and is one of the reasons for social stratification and transformation. Information inequality also arises from the existence of different rights to access information (resource owners, administrators, network moderators), as well as the cognitive-semantic side of information technology that arises on the basis of the individual's ability to abstract thinking. Since information resources are mainly in English, most users cannot use them, finding themselves at a disadvantage because of ignorance of the language.

Table 1: Needs of interviewed families in social assistance (%)

No.	Family composition	Socio-educational	Socio-psychological	Socio-economic	Socio-legal
1.	Widow (widower), having many children			0.1	
2.	Widow (widower), one or two children		0.1		
3.	Multigenerational			0.1	
4.	Single mother (father), having many children			0.1	
5.	Single mother (father), one or two children	0.5	0.5	2.0	0.4
6.	Full family, having many children	0.1	0.4	1.0	0.2
7.	Full family, one or two children	0.1		0.6	0.1
8.	Divorced mother (father), having many children			0.4	
9.	Divorced mother (father), one or two children		0.6	3.0	0.2
10.	Family without children				

Low-income families are characterized not only by a lower level of wages but also by a large dependency burden, which in the future can lead to a decrease in their per capita income. A distinctive feature in the economic position of these categories of citizens is not only a different level of income but the level and quality of their lives. The property security of representatives of low-income families is modest, which indicates a fairly low level of their lives and their lack of sufficient resources for the future. In recent years, families have to gradually sell their previously owned property – apartments, garages to maintain their current standard of living (Rodionova, 2014).

As this study shows, the burden for families with underage children is less critical than the burden for families with non-working pensioners (invalids). Also, the situation in the family is very negatively affected by the presence of chronically ill family members who officially do not have a disability (Yadov, 2005).

CONCLUSION

The result of the theoretical and practical research is the organizational and managerial mechanism for overcoming poverty in Noyabrsk, in which the emphasis is on the interaction of all socially important structures with the City Administration in order to conduct a permanent detailed control and analysis of the quality of social services provided to the poor, as well as synchronizing the work of social services to ensure the provision of equal opportunities for residents of the city in overcoming poverty.

The main goal of interaction between management bodies and the citizens when implementing the organizational and managerial mechanism will be to raise the financial and socio-cultural level of the poor by creating the necessary conditions for the self-sustainment and self-realization of the individual.

On the basis of our study, we can conclude that the poverty of low-income families is a consequence of interrelated factors: economic (low wages and its high differentiation, unemployment); social (disability, old age, marginalization, child neglect); demographic (single-parent families, families with a high dependency burden, the youth and the older generation); political (the break of the existing inter-regional ties, forced migration).

Obviously, in life attitudes of low-income families, there are more similarities than differences, which confirms the preservation of the internal worldview unity of the overwhelming majority of this category of families.

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