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AN OVERVIEW OF THE CIVILIZATIONAL PARADIGM FROM THE ANGLE OF STRUCTURALIST IDEAS

Problem setting. As well-known, the issue of correlation between social and cultural formations is of a particular interest in contemporary "academic world", especially due to the observation on the part of many thinkers of the increasing "decline" of conventional norms and values under conditions of the so-called "mass society".

But we would like to dwell on the two vivid phenomena in contemporary social theory, since it is these phenomena that enable us to grasp the true reasons of incoming sociocultural crisis, spreading to both advanced and non-advanced societies, and they help us to trace the logic of development of leading approaches in sociocultural studies throughout the whole 20th century. We believe that all the above only improve possible studies in this area.

So, as far as the logic of modern sociocultural thought is concerned, we can observe two clear trends, related, primarily, to civilizational approach and structuralist strategy. First, the obvious attempt of leading thinkers of 20th century, in particular, the developers of civilizational paradigm to avoid the term "society" altogether, substituting it with the term "civilization." And second, we can see a quite clear tendency on the part of adherents of structuralism to identify the term "society" with the terms "social structure" and "social system". Therefore, the **direct aim of this paper** to reveal the true intentions of representatives of these trends in terms of clarifying their basic "intuitions". To achieve this goal, we should reveal the ideological content of both conceptions.

The first that we can find out in the above context that both structuralists and representatives of the so-called civilizational approach regard "cultural code" as a foundation for function of the entire society, including its economic basis. However, when they turn to the quite "metaphysical" question about "prime cause" of very "code", they inevitably meet to a certain complexity.

Analysis of recent research. Let us, briefly, recall the main ideas, which were offered by developers of civilizational paradigm. They paid, primarily, attention to the significance of the cultural background in social development, precisely, in national development, since in their deep conviction, it is nation that is direct embodiment ("personification") of the corresponding "cultural code".

In other words, the representatives of given direction, namely Osvald Spengler, Max Weber, Samual Huntington, etc. share a common belief in decisive influence of a certain "spirit" ("gestalt", "habitus", "soul", etc.) of culture on the historical "destiny" of nation, including its social order, basic value system and economic life. In addition, according to a lot of them, this "spirit" is initially mediated by religious creeds.

It would seem that supporters of civilizational paradigm turn to this idea due to the impossibility of any explanation of specifics (variety) of civilizations, their various historical path, especially, the religious creeds, which are laid the basis for these civilizations. And, in fact, we can hardly answer these questions.

But the works of the most prominent proponents of the civilizational argument testify that, firstly, they are extremely focus not only on the "nations", which are more and less successful in historical term. Their authors, largely, concern with the "destiny" of civilization, titled as "western". Secondly, when referring to the issue of materialization of this "spirit", "its deep cultural implication in history" [9, 172–173], *they inevitably realize the necessity of returning to the social context as the determining factor of culture.*

For example, most developers of the civilizational paradigm share common views on the core of Western "culture", associating it with the so-called "rationality", treated differently – in dependence

on various contexts. Nevertheless, it is known for certain, that over the centuries, pre-capitalist Western communities ("civilization") had a completely different structure with a powerful influence of Christianity on all spheres of public life, but with a low threshold of affective self-control, and therefore with a high level of violence and cruelty both in interpersonal and legal practices. Inhuman executions and torture were commonplace in everyday life. It is no coincidence that the structuralist Foucault, for instance, had to describe them only as "bloody", "gloomy festival of punishment", "the theatrical representation of pain" [2, 14], although, in contrast to Guattari and Deleuze, he denied their libidinal nature.

Along with that, a prominent researcher of 20th century Norbert Elias no less convincingly argued that the so-called "rationality" of "western civilization", emphasized so frequently on the part of Spengler and Weber, *is a historical achievement due to the emergence of such pattern of society ("figuration") as Absolutism.* And it does not matter, in what terms this rationality is considered – in ethical terms, that is, from perspective of strong restraint imperative, or in economic terms, that is, from perspective of "the saving", "strict calculating between profits and expenses" [10, 21–12].

Indeed, Spengler and other researchers, related to the civilizational approach, overlook the fact that the so-called "western civilization" in its cultural development went through several stages with their inherent characteristics. This civilization also differs from others in its equally specific social history in terms of its constant structural transformation.

But even though the original core of culture is sacred, therefore is incomprehensible, some of developers of civilizational arguments conscious that the cultural "core' is closely related to ethics, rather than to "creeds". It is noteworthy, Spengler, for example, clearly conceived that cultures or civilizations "live" as long as they are socially organized in terms of keeping some social stability ("order"), exercising by elites due to development and implementation of mechanisms of mass control to achieve relative equilibrium between themselves and other "strata".

Furthermore, in his deep conviction, it is elites who are the true embodiment of cultural code, particularly, an aristocracy solely "works out the Destiny of a nation, there is a minority, which in the name of all represents and fulfils its history" [9, 172–123]. That is the reason why communities (peoples), which have not such aristocracy, or has lost it due to essential transformation, are doomed to cultural "death", hence to "decline" of their identity.

Main material. In contrast to widespread statements, we believe that in the works of outstanding representatives of civilizational paradigms is present a serious concern, and even a kind of foresight of the future of Western civilization, rather than an attempt to substantiate its cultural dominance. It is primarily referring to the studies, which belong to O. Spengler ("The Decline of the West"), M. Weber ("The Protestant Ethics and The Spirit of Capitalism"), S. Huntington ("The Clash of Civilizations, and the remaking of World Order"), and there are many other, no less vivid thinkers, who tend to civilizational "anxiety".

Furthermore, at the end of the above treatises, almost every author focuses on the destructive influence of advanced capitalism, namely the growth of extended production and corresponding extended consumption as an essential condition for the expansion of the mass society. For both Spengler and many other prominent thinkers, the phenomenon of mass society is directly associated with an obvious decline of social structure, that is, with the loss of clear social differentiation and the ability to create stable social connections (the factor of social equilibrium), resulted in the mentioned-above "death" and hard cultural consequences. As soon as the "mass" becomes the main factor of social development, the profound spiritual and moral "decomposition" begins, and nation inevitably turns into the "mob". In other words, the "mass" transforms nations in such a way, that they become to be not able to reproduce its cultural code, that is, their civilizational identity.

According to structuralists, any human community is largely determined by social characteristics (certain models of relationships and interdependences), which affect the peculiarities of culture, especially when there is talking about the normative one: "The starting point must be the concept of a society, defined as a collectivity, i.e., a system of concrete interacting human individuals, which is the primary bearer of a distinctive institutionalized culture and which cannot be said to be a differentiated subsystem of a higher-order collectivity oriented to most of the functional exigencies of a social system... *a hierarchy of generality of the patterns of normative culture* institutionalized in a social system, *one that corresponds to the general hierarchical relations of its structural components. Each subunit of the society, as collectivity, will have its own institutionalized values, which should be conceived as specifications, at the appropriate level, of the more general values of the society*" [7, 433].

In general, structuralists refer to the fact that any cultural code exists in the form of certain conventional "patterns", which depend on a complex of social determinants, including the characteristics of very "social system", mainly the system of "social sanctions", related to the so-called repressive machine and reward system. Furthermore, they

also pay great attention to the issue of deviation ("transgression"), that inevitably leads to the need for consideration of so-called affective context of "ethics", which is currently associated with social relationships, rather than with the "creeds".

It also refers to affective control as a certain component and direct function of culture, including control over human instincts. In other words, the most prominent scholars in the modern humanities argue, that many human affects and impulses are subject to social modeling, which Norbert Elias, for example, marks with the word "refinement", "purifying desire". Furthermore, ethics (morality), and along with it the affective culture depend on the level of personal incorporation of an individual into any community, union, etc., and finally, on the mode of production.

Thus, when following this logic, we can say about the existence of "societies", which are ascetic or hedonistic, peaceful or, *vice versa*, aggressive, collectivist or individualistic, advanced or, conversely, non-advanced. These patterns can be various, depending on alternative criteria, therefore, we can obtain various classifications of social systems.

Parsons, for example describes the society (social system) in dependence on so-called "subsystems", namely, he focuses on the religious system, the systems of power and production relations etc., since in his deep conviction "*the over-all collectivity structure cannot be divorced from political organization, oriented to maintaining commitments to this order and to the jurisdictional functions associated with it, in relation both to its own population and to other societies...* The primary area in which the problems of value-commitment are played out is that of religion; for most societies, the paramount over-all collectivity has been at the same time a religious collectivity and a political collectivity, both a "church" and a "state". "*Law, we may say, has tended to stand in the middle, to be legitimized by religion and enforced by political authority ...*" [7, 434]. In general, the social analysis here is mostly reduced to descriptive analysis, directed to finding and conceptualizing social patterns (the structures), irrespective of the issue of their historical modifications within frameworks of a particular civilization.

It is noteworthy, a lot of prominent sociologists and anthropologists of modernity insist on some variability and relativity "normative cultures", especially, in relation to current experience. In this regard, the structuralist doctrine of cultural dependence on social structure (basic institutions) in poststructuralism will be completed by the principle of development, or *vice versa*, the principle of "involution" with references to economic determinants.

It is well known that Nietzsche, for example, was the first to ground the dependence of ethics on social structure, relying largely on the history of ancient civilizations, despite of his reducing this structure to only upper-class and "bottoms". To be more precise, he stated about existence only two "ethos" – the aristocratic, which Nietzsche associated with his concept of the "Overman" and the morality of herd, which, according to him, symbolizes the "virtues" of the common humans.

In general, there are three main discoveries of Nietzsche, which can be considered as the most significant for further humanitarian studies; firstly, his thesis that it is solely fear of punishment that promotes the formation of moral feelings, secondly, power has a libidinal basis, which explains the phenomenon of superfluous cruelty, for example, the practices of "the most disgusting mutilations". And finally, the idea of the economic origins of morality, in particular the statement of dependence of the views on moral duty on its expediency.

It appears that this Nietzschean theory, especially his statement about dominant role of ruling class in creating both the cultural patterns ("values") and "destiny" of the entire community had been borrowed by many thinkers. Suffice it to mention Spengler's' studies, the works of Zigmund Freud and Norbert Elias, including the representatives of post-structuralism.

As for the structuralism, its direct aim to substantiate the correlation between the social structure and so-called normative culture, in particular the dependence of national development on a certain model of social relationships. And the representatives of civilizational approach had to admit the obviousness and validity of this statement.

But, when referring to such brilliant thinkers of modernity as N. Elias and M. Foucault, we can grasp that according to their deep conviction, it is the pattern of power, i.e. social control system ("discourses of powers") that is "primary", whereas the cultural system is even "tertiary", rather than "secondary". Either way, one can conclude that cultural code is not a constant, thus it is subject to historical transformation, caused by a profound transformation of the entire system of social relations, especially, of the power system.

At first glance, structuralists demonstrate a rather negative attitude towards the principle of historicity in social theory, especially towards "evolutionism". Nevertheless, starting with Elias and ending with developers of poststructuralist strategies, they admit the essential structural transformation of advanced societies, influenced by the "spirit of capitalism" with an emphasis on the mode of production.

It is quite clear that in the so-called pre-modern period of the civilizing process, a fundamental role in

society belonged to familial institutions, or in put it in structuralist term, to *kinship institutions*. That is the reason why the cultural core here was composed of the "relational values", i.e. the values, which were relevant to interpersonal relationships, hence to specific morality in terms of conventional system of behavioral imperatives. A pattern of relationships, which was here dominant, was determined by request to comply with the conventional hierarchal order, accompanied by a rigid affective-emotional self-constraining.

In this case, the society was a very complex system of interdependences and coercions – *the figuration* (Elias), which was firmly determined by the pattern of social statuses (stratification), related primarily to the system of power, various unions, estates, guilds, etc. These societies were societies of strong families, connections and alliances. And only in a more later period of development the above social model is transformed into an individualistic society of production and consumption.

To put it differently, structuralism deals with such social "objects", within which the regulation and ordering of relationships are performed, therefore functions of exchange and distribution of "facilities" in dependence on the established "pecking order" and conduct rules. The cultural "core" here relates to the moral sphere, which representatives of civilizational paradigm no less convincingly insist on, *since it is quite clear that any cultural "gestalt", "soul", "habitus", "ethos", etc. at the same time is a certain understanding the "good" and "evil", therefore a certain system of prohibitions.*

Furthermore, it is this statement that combines of representatives both structuralism and civilizational approach in their vision of the nature of the human communities: a society, or civilization can reproduce itself if it is able to reproduce of culture, namely, to control of deviant behavior.

In the conditions of post-industrial formation an essential transformation of the over-all social structure occurs, both classes and institutions, mediated by the dragging of "masses" into the area of production and consumption, spreading these practices on the global scale.

As a result, not only mass society dominates, but also the institutions, which perform the functions of production, accumulation distribution of "goods", and in fact – financial "flows". It is production discourse that mostly prevails. Production itself, as Guattari claims, has become "desiring", which can produce any desire, as long as it strives for profits.

Thus, a relativity monolithic society emerges, primarily oriented toward consumption with a high degree of both social and interpersonal alienation. As for as the system of production is concerned, it is captured by the power of "the symbolic value" of fictious capital, by the production of digital technologies.

All the above-mentioned contributes to the genesis of a certain type of personality, who from the point view of prominent postmodern anthropologies is largely considered as "narcissistic" (J. Lipovetsky), necrophilic (E. Fromm) or schizoid types (F. Guattari), i.e. as a Subject, who is mostly destructive and defective in moral term, concerned primarily with "objects, rather than persons", including the virtual ones.

It is obvious that moral alienation, emphasized on the part of both developers of the civilizational approach and the structuralist discourse, lead to affective arbitrariness as a shared pattern of behavior, therefore the violence in social relationships is only increasing. It is difficult for such a society to reproduce itself in terms of keeping some fixed connections and relationships, since its fundamental institutions are largely "declining".

Conclusions. It is extremely difficult to contest the statement about dependence of society on the state of its culture. But, as for as very culture is concerned, most of developers of the civilizational paradigm tend to reduce it to characteristics of "religious creeds", which are incomprehensible in their core. Within the framework of the above paradigm, it turns out that it is these "creeds" that determine a certain destiny of the community, which is called here as "race", "nation", or "civilization", rather than just "society".

Structuralists rationale for the idea of a direct correlation between certain society and its culture. But finally, both structuralists and adherents of civilizational approach had to recognize of historical variability of cultural "code" due to the full awareness of the crisis of "civilizations" under conditions of incoming "mass". Put it another way, they had to admit the influence of postmodern social formation, called *the consumer society* on the transformation of the cultural "habitus" of civilizations with their gradual spiritual "decadence".

Presumably, due to this reason both structuralists and explores of "civilizing process" have focused on the issue of capitalism, its nature and possible modalities. Similar to developers of social critical theory, these discourses are no less concern with "revolt of the masses" (Jose Ortega y Gasset) or "mass society" as a shared topic for a lot of social researchers of the end of 20th century.

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Summary

***Sajtarly I. A., Ishchenko O. M.* An overview of the civilizational paradigm from the angle of structuralist ideas.** – Article.

This article examines the issue of the social fundamentals of culture in the context of the ideas of the leading trends in contemporary sociocultural thought, namely structuralism and so-called civilizational paradigm. This largely refers to such prominent thinkers, who laid the solid foundation for the further development of the entire social theory and theory of culture, particularly Osvald Spengler, Max Weber, Norbert Elias, Talcott Parsons etc.

When examining the above issue, it was revealed that the developers of the so-called civilizational approach in the theory of culture and some adherents of structuralism share a common view on the determining role of social structure, namely they constantly emphasize that there is a certain correlation between its transformations and the state of the values system, therefore the "civilization" *per se.*

It was also turned out that both structuralists and developers of civilizational arguments had to admit the corrupting influence of spreading mass society on original "intuition" of cultures-civilizations, which is accompanied by enforcing profound economic and political transformations, which essentially transform the entire social system of postmodernity.

According to most scientists, the postmodern cultural era and the corresponding social formation are characterized by an enhanced massification, which significantly reduces the influence of cultural tradition, in particular, religious creeds and relevant ethics. In other words, the established ethical core of culture is emasculated by the total economic discourse of production and consumption.

All the above leads to both the social crisis in term of inability of the subject of social relations to create the fixed connections or alliances and an extreme increase of the so-called destructiveness as a direct threat for the entire sociality. That is the reason why, many outstanding thinkers, including the above-mentioned, refer to the issue of mass society, considered it as the main source of cultural decomposition, which, according to them, unavoidably results in both social and civilizational "decline".

Key words: advanced society, civilization, cultural code, culture, ethics, mass society, nation, normative culture, social structure, social system.

Анотація

***Сайтарли I. А., Іщенко О. М.* Огляд цивілізаційної парадигми з точки зору структуралістських ідей.** – Стаття.

У статті розглядається питання соціальних засад культури в контексті ідей провідних напрямів сучасної соціокультурної думки, а саме структуралізму та так званої цивілізаційної парадигми. Багато в чому це стосується таких видатних мислителів, які заклали міцну основу для подальшого розвитку всієї сучасної соціальної теорії та теорії культури, зокрема Освальда Шпенглера, Макса Вебера, Норберта Еліаса, Талкотта Парсонса та ін.

При розгляді вищезазначеного питання було виявлено, що розробники так званого цивілізаційного підходу в теорії культури та ціла низка прихильників структуралізму поділяють спільну точку зору щодо визначальної ролі соціальної структури, а саме, вони постійно наголошують на існуванні певного зв'язку між її трансформаціями та станом системи цінностей, отже, «цивілізації» як такої.

З'ясувалося також, що як структуралістам, так і розробникам цивілізаційної аргументації довелось визнати руйнівний вплив поширення масового суспільства на початкову «інтуїцію» культур-цивілізацій з подальшим проведенням глибоких економічних і політичних трансформацій, які істотно змінюють усю соціальну систему постмодерну.

На думку більшості науковців, постмодерна культурна доба та відповідна їй соціальна формація, вирізняються підкресленою масовизацією, що суттєвим чином нівелює вплив культурної традиції, зокрема релігійних віровчень і відповідної їм етики. Іншими словами, усталене етичне ядро культури вихолощується всеохоплюючим економічним дискурсом виробництва та споживання.

Усе вищезазначене призводить як до соціальної кризи у вигляді неспроможності суб'єкта суспільних відносин створювати фіксовані зв'язки чи союзи, так і до надзвичайного зростання так званої деструктивності як прямої загрози для всієї соціальності. Саме тому низка видатних мислителів, зокрема згадані вище, звертаючись до проблеми масового суспільства, розглядали його як головне джерело культурного розпаду, яке, на їхню думку, неминуче призводить як до соціального, так і до цивілізаційного «кінця».

Ключові слова: розвинене суспільство, цивілізація, культурний код, культура, етика, масове суспільство, нація, нормативна культура. соціальна структура, соціальна система.