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The Concept of “Knowledge Society” in the Context of Information Era

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For socio humanities last few centuries have been characteristic special alternations of thematic trends, which were dictated with typical scientific innovations and authoritative scholars and quickly gained popularity in the academic communities of the world. As these tendentious objects for short periods of each discussion can be called the idea of a post industrial society in 60–80 years of the twentieth century, or same concept in the consumer society 60–90th years, whether the concept of “Sustainable human development” that burst in planetary discourse in 90th. In our national tradition we can observe synchronous response to so called “scientific trends”, which is truth with the obvious delay. Futures theories are relatively young formations in modern science, have managed to gain significant popularity among scholars and readers worldwide, and it is no accident¹. Currently time Ukrainian socio-humanitarian science got involved in such a well-known concept as a “knowledge society”.

Closely associated with the ideas of the information society, post-industrial capitalism and the scientific revolution, the concept of the knowledge society is a kind of ideal, perhaps even utopian, of modern Ukrainian intellectuals. What is the secret of the popularity of this idea in our country and abroad? Obviously,

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¹ S. Terepiszczy, *Przyszłość jako przedmiot badań filozofii społecznej*, Studia Warmińskie 52 (2015), p. 63.

the idea of power of knowledge that comes with its roots back to the seventeenth century, formed specific European outlook in which education takes on special value. The latter is largely served as a means of formation moral, aesthetic taste, tolerance and so on. If the oriental mentality tends to shape various aspects of human personality through standardization of irrational behavior and practices, the western cross-cutting filament permeated ancient idea of “rational soul”, where the acquisition of knowledge is, at the same time, the acquisition of all the other qualities of a great personality. D.Svyrydenko stands on position that personality isn’t a result of informational influence, but one is a result of interaction with society, everyday life and another personalities². In modified form this maxim and development has reached our days. In addition, it was reinforced by technical and demographic growth that pushed humanity to the production of new knowledge and ideas. Nowadays, the idea of knowledge society concept resembles communism knowledge, where every member of society under certain conditions, equal opportunities and the right to receive and produce information and education in general.

However the question of the status of practical concepts and remains the same on the agenda of local scientists. Can we achieve this ideal? Or whether to do a model for the ideal?

Being based on these problems in our time is rather important to investigate the validity of the concept of the knowledge society in the context of the contemporary needs of humanity. Within this small study we aim to reveal the contradictions of the possibility of a knowledge society against the background of information-capitalist era first half of the XXI century.

In the modern scientific discourse is no longer a novelty exercise to “correct” distinction between the concepts of “information society” and “knowledge society”. The first, which was described in detail in famous works of A. Toffler³ and Daniel Bell⁴ and reflects structural changes in the field of world production – increasing orientation of advanced regional economies to work with intangible goods⁵. The second concept is kind of purpose, rather than describing the real socio-economic situation. Just as in the case of the “information society” we are dealing with valuable ideas, innovations and discoveries, but with radically different semantic accent.

Ukrainian scholar in concept of knowledge societies N. Pisarenko, for instance, points out: “[...] it becomes the temptation for identification of the

² D. Svyrydenko, *Globalization as a factor of academic mobility processes expanding Philosophy and Cosmology* 14 (2015), p. 225.

³ A. Toffler, *The Third Wave*, Bantam Books 1980.

⁴ D. Bell, *The Social Frame-work of the Information Society*, Oxford 1980.

⁵ W. Hutton, A. Giddens (eds.), *On The Edge. Living with Global Capitalism*, London 2000.

concepts of ‘information society and knowledge society’, but it should be noted that the first term refers more narrowly technology, while the second – ‘knowledge society’ – not limited to one model, and provides greater significance wide range of social, economical, ethical and political parameters”⁶. This view removes the concept of “information society” technical side of existence, and “knowledge society” all other spheres of human existence, who “still need to be improved”. Other terms follows the Kiev researcher A. Melnyk, her vision of the problem based on distinguishing various levels of society, which has lower means, but does not know how to apply them, and higher in contrast to the lower, the better is the practical application of available information and materials. “The knowledge society is seen as a higher level of development of the information society, where the emphasis is not just on the information and the ability to work with it, produce new knowledge”⁷.

On our view, this controversial issue is based on multiple features. First, the basic categories that indicate the semantic meaning of these terms – the difference between the information society and knowledge society lies in distinguishing the concepts of “information” and “knowledge”. Second, the emergence of patterns of the first and second phenomenon – it is obvious pattern emergence of the information society, as a stage of capitalism, and equally obvious is, so far, being purely conceptual “knowledge society”. Thirdly, the motivational and historical-philosophical sense of the existence of each type of society – first, there is a historical necessity, due to the capabilities of certain social classes for enrichment; and the second, created and implemented by the will of a certain range of intellectuals and politicians to achieve, in their opinion, social benefits.

At the beginning, it’s reasonable to focus on the fundamental distinction between the concepts of knowledge and information. At first glance, pretty close concept integrates not only by reason and effect, which is usually described by statement: “information – knowledge is not processed”. Information – a neoplasm of the twentieth century, no wonder it happens in the last era of “mass production”. Unlike the “knowledge”, whose understanding had been existed for thousands of years, information has radically objective and formal nature, it excludes the active participation of the subjective mind. Post-capitalist modernity has created in our minds the ideal of “informed” of the individual, the structure of which top priority is not its own participation nor meaningful integri-

⁶ N. Pisarenko, *Concept of “knowledge societies”: content, main features*, Vodny Transport 2 (2013), p. 104.

⁷ O. Melnik, *Information Society and knowledge society – establishment and development concepts* Vestnik NTU „KPI”, Philosophy. Psychology. Pedagogy 2 (20) (2007), part 2, p. 57.

ty and significance of the object of knowledge, and their relevance and feasibility. The global information of globalization in relation to the knowledge of the Enlightenment, much better meets the needs of their pragmatic implementation. In addition, steps and semantic reasons of such metamorphosis still remain unknown to our contemporaries. In the era of computerization and the cult of “successful bureaucrat-businessman” topologically knowledge flows into information and finding the line between them becomes harder and harder.

Undoubtedly knowledge plays a much higher role, than it was 100 years ago, but the central industrial importance in the present era is played by, however, information. Knowledge rather serves its satellite or prime mover. The invention or idea force the emergence of countless new information flows, giving space to achieve success within the rules of the modern post-industrial society. So, let's give some definitions:

Knowledge – is the result of systematic knowledge, creating a subjective image of reality in the form of concepts and ideas.

Information – a way of life and knowledge of its elements, characterized by accessibility to the pragmatic application of targeted individual or machine.

Most modern scientists support the idea that ideas ensure success and give reasons for the economic development of a group of people or an individual. But this is not so. After all, such a system requires extremely strict approach to authorship, which rightly assessed the contribution of each of the inventors and creators. Imagine a situation where China indicating its authorship of invention in the field of Arabic numerals, requires the payment of all past patent for technical inventions. It sounds absurd, but not without a lot of truth.

For making the modern world knowledge as practical, for giving it its “profitable fruits”, it must be partly “technized” – reduced to information.

The origin and development of the concept of “knowledge societies” is associated with the work of American economist of Austrian origin Fritz Machlup⁸. The researcher analyzes how related are production, market and knowledge. It reveals the real and potential status of science and education in the context of speeding up economic development. He was one of the first who managed to predict vectors required of successful states in the coming 20–30 years.

Since then, the concept of “Knowledge Society” was unprecedented in popularity among intellectuals and politicians around the world. It was supported by the representatives of international organizations, in particular, it was one of the topics in the header reports UNESCO. In 2005, in particular in the speech

⁸ F. Machlup, *A History of Thought on Economic Integration*, Columbia University Press 1977.

Roger Cowell in meeting in Paris indicated the following principles of building a knowledge society⁹:

- The knowledge society is a society which increases its potential through its diversity and expand their capacity.
- The knowledge society should facilitate knowledge sharing.
- Company knowledge is not limited to the information.

In this speech Cowell represents the position of UNESCO and demonstrates quite clearly a sign of this concept – it occurs as a reaction to mercantilism knowledge in the information society and designed to overcome the problems that arise due to uncontrollable attack of business in education and science in the twentieth century. The knowledge society – in today’s information society, is an attempt to revive the value of knowledge. However, the means that are postulated in this model of society, will not achieve results, as sharing relevant knowledge, which is the most valuable information, is simply unprofitable and destructive to regional economies. Modern society is based more on localization “of knowledge” and spreading “mass”. Moreover, historical experience shows that scientific knowledge will never be massive, it is always available to a small group of talented scientists.

Also not satisfied with the concept of “knowledge society” are many scientists outside the so-called Western tradition, which is the origin. In particular, the Russian scientist Vladimir Shutov, with futures the “21st century – what to expect?” indicates that the objective idealistic views of his European colleagues cannot be achieved in a pinch in the next hundred years. He stressed that in the XXI century indeed social system based on these three pillars – information, technology, science. “One should not forget that all this is not a panacea, the elixir of youth, or the way in” heaven on earth but merely a new means of providing power “top”. If the global hierarchical structure of “mono globalism” will be built, the need for a more or less harmonious development of these “whales” do not be¹⁰. In addition, Shutov underlines that the structure of modern “knowledge” is focused more on technological progress, which leads to excessive specialization of scientists. This trend, in turn, leads to the fact that the scientific and productive age people (about 30 to 45 years) is shorter because is it necessary education and knowledge too late.

Another famous Russian scientist, author of the bestselling philosophical “Factor understanding”, Alexander Zinoviev, comes to criticism of “information society” and the concept of “knowledge societies” in particular, in terms of the

⁹ R. Cowell, *Towards knowledge societies*, in: UNESCO World Report, UNESCO Publishing, Paris, 2005, p. 45.

¹⁰ V. Shutov, *Century 21 – what to expect*, Moscow 2003, p. 156.

question of real growth of intelligence of the masses. According to him, in modern society the issue of de-intellectualization loss is a wide range of people for some reason is not, though, in this, the most his opinion, is the fatal mistake of our time. In addition, he believes that the efforts of modern intelligence is no longer focused on something really relevant and useful, and applied to solve problems and inconveniences that actually arise from the intellectual and technical activities. On this occasion he said: "The fact that it is such an abundance of intelligence, increase its practical power, excessive cluttering with it man's living space, his unrestrained distortion and distribution has become powerful social basis colossal understatement total level of human intelligence and utter dullness of huge masses of people, forming masses of people not under the laws of the formation of the best minds, talents and geniuses and all the best representatives of the human race. This status these people have lost already"¹¹. The author points to the destructive vector of development of modern information society, and the idea of "knowledge societies" it looks just as another means of exploitation of pseudo-intellectuals minds of the population who got poisoned with this system, and now educate themselves in their likeness.

Zinoviev thinks that technologization and falsification of knowledge in a modern, primarily Western world, led to the loss of so-called "factor understanding" – special abilities of developed intellect to see the meaning of overall picture of the knowledge they need and the main value. "Line of Western civilization, launched thinkers of past centuries, was just dangling as one of the determining factors of social evolution. From the evolutionary process of humanity down much of it. The absurdity of evolution is that now it is easier to prepare thousands of professionals in various fields of science, than a single, real gossip-free within the meaning of the universe knowledge bases and able to develop quite good results of their research"¹². The current situation in the field of being of the intellectual life author compares with the environmental – it is dirty and mutilated, but unlike the latter problem intellect remain on the periphery of humanity – no one notices its disastrous state. The knowledge society, which is offered by Western politicians – is nothing more than public consumption technical information, which does not make humanity "smarter".

Apart from radical critics of the concept of the knowledge society there are also scholars who express dissatisfaction with the possible partial aspects of "implementation" of such a model society. One of these researchers can be considered as the German sociologist and philosopher Jerald Bachman. His work "Modern society, risk society, information society, knowledge society"

¹¹ A. Zynovev, *Factor of understanding*, Moscow 2006, p. 508.

¹² Ibidem.

that has managed to gain popularity and academia on the territory of CIS, describes modern society as risk society and analyze real possibilities and the need for its transformation to a knowledge society. Behman recognizes that in the current academic situation we are seeing a radical change in the nature of objective knowledge, it has become dependent on other spheres of social life. “Focused on learning and aimed at explaining science as a place far from the practice of art experimentation and building theories consistent granted ideal of classical physics and from there starting his triumphant march, can now be found only in parts of science. At the same time there is a new assessment of functioning of science and scientific potential, by which even basic research, whether we like it or not, relevant and subject to the public interest”¹³. On this basis binary industrial society – “labor” and “capital” are replaced by two others – “information” and “knowledge.” For Behman, society of knowledge is not one of speculative concepts, is more real stage of modern social development of mankind.

On the basis of the facts, given by the German researcher, we can observe the following trends in the development of modern scientific knowledge, which is the core of our society:

1. Differential trend – a vector of doctrine which is inherited from the era of research in modern times. It is characterized with disciplinary science-based articulation of new items.

2. Integration trend – the opposite direction to the differential development of science, but that paradoxically coexists within a single system of values. It occurs as tumors of the information age, as “the principle of science of modern time, which ensured her success, namely productivity growth through disciplinary scientific division of labor, cannot solve new problems facing modern science.

3. Assimilation trend – vector of reforming a science, related to its dissolution in many other spheres of social life, including the economy, politics and more”¹⁴.

In addition to the above trends, Behman connects the development of contemporary knowledge society with a rather sensational in 90th of XX century the concept of sustainable development. In his opinion, maintaining the knowledge society is possible only in the case provided for sustainable development between science and politics, science and economy. How these two spheres of human activity on the case is crucial for the future of our planet and humanity.

¹³ J. Bachman, *Modern society: risk society, information society, knowledge society*, Moscow 2012, p. 137.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

The very formulation of the problem of sustainable development already shows that the degree of interaction of science with politics reaches its climax, the latter has simply cannot do without scientific justification and advice. Society becomes as radically problem oriented. Very little amount of research now has no practical purpose and they are aimed at resolving certain potential wrong, gaps, needs and so on. Good it or bad, is one of the extremely controversial issues for now.

POJĘCIE „SPOŁECZEŃSTWO WIEDZY” W KONTEKŚCIE ERY INFORMACYJNEJ

(STRESZCZENIE)

Artykuł jest poświęcony analizie pojęcia „społeczeństwo wiedzy” w kontekście coraz dynamiczniejszej informatyzacji różnych płaszczyzn ludzkiego życia. Szczególną uwagę zwrócono na argumenty, w świetle których faktyczne istnienie obecnie fenomenu oznaczanego powszechnie terminem „społeczeństwo wiedzy” może zostać zakwestionowane. Ukazano ponadto, że „społeczeństwo wiedzy” wciąż jest jedynie ideałem spekulatywnym. Analizując to pojęcie, ujawniono także podstawowe przyczyny, które utrudniają urzeczywistnienie się „społeczeństwa wiedzy”.

THE CONCEPT OF “KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY” IN THE CONTEXT OF INFORMATION ERA

(SUMMARY)

The article is devoted to the scientific analysis of the concept of “knowledge societies” in context for the possibility of its real use. Special attention is given to the opposition of positions on this theory, which is non-typical for research in this area. Based on the works of local and foreign academics, the author describes a society of knowledge model as a speculative ideal, which either conflict with modern informational capitalism, dissolved therein, without qualitative impact on the very social system. The analysis of concepts also revealed several fundamental reasons, which prevent the formation of knowledge society in our time.

DER BEGRIFF „WISSENSGESELLCHAFT” IM ZUSAMMENHANG DES INFORMATIONENZEITALTERS

(ZUSAMMENFASSUNG)

Der Artikel konzentriert sich auf die wissenschaftliche Analyse des Begriffs „Wissensgesellschaft” im Zusammenhang mit dem. Die besondere Aufmerksamkeit konzentriert sich auf die Positionen der Opposition gegen diese Theorie, was für die Forschung in diesem Bereich untypisch ist. Der Autor beschreibt die Wissensgesellschaft als spekulatives Ideal, das im Konflikt mit dem modernen Informationskapitalismus ist. Durch die Analyse des Begriffs „Wissensgesellschaft” hat der Autor mehrere fundamentale Gründe festgestellt, die seine Entstehung in unserer Zeit verhindern.