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THE MEDIA SCENARIOS OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF
BIOPOLITICS

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Abstract

The relevance of the research topic is predetermined by the strategies that are now being implemented in Western society and which are commonly called biopolitics. Biopolitics is a type of functioning and redistribution of power, when an object disposed of by power influence ceases to experience any compulsion, understanding what is happening as something that is immanent to it due to the completely natural laws of biological existence. Knowledge of the objective laws of biological reproduction of the population is established as the foundation of state power. The impact of such power on the social body is realized through the continuous improvement of communication systems that allow you to influence human needs. If earlier society was inherently “disciplinary” (that is, it tried to normalize human behavior through its inclusion in the network of disciplinary institutions - schools, factories, armies, prisons), now control is shifting more and more towards the media as a biopower resource that makes a bet on managing desires. Thus, the qualitative difference between disciplinary power and biopolitical power is that the former relies on coercion, while the latter creates mechanisms for minimizing negative manifestations from the point of view of human biological existence. Therefore, the analysis of the interaction of biopolitics and modern digital media seems to us methodologically promising and interesting.

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1. Introduction

As you know, in the middle of the 20th century, Foucault (1982) introduced the concept of “biopolitics” into scientific circulation - a social practice in which power in the most extreme version expands the boundaries of its application, subjugating the entire “physiological” existence of a person. By diffusion into various areas of social space, bio-power becomes “molecularized” and turns into a kind of non-variance of “soft power”, i.e. its application, losing its directivity, becomes softer and invisible. In the course of its evolution, biopolitics turned into a way of managing society by controlling “life itself”, which, for its part, was transformed into an element of the political space of power relations. At the same time, the most important role in the distribution of such power is played by the media - a specific sphere of communication between the object and the subject of power influence, mediated by various media institutions.

Media is the sphere of relations between the state and society that allows the public to feel that it is understood. And if, for example, the connection between biopolitics and economics has already been considered in the domestic literature, then there are very few works devoted to the influence of biopolitical practices on the media. Modern media drift more and more away from rational concepts of explaining reality to emotional constructions, which, in general, is consistent with biopower strategies. Previously, management methods were based on rationality (the concept of "Enlightenment"). Now, the lower the level of rationality, the more effective the effect on the masses.

2. Problem Statement

The phenomenon of “biopolitics” can be understood more fully if we look at it through the prism of media strategies for exercising power in modern society. The article will attempt to analyze the mutual influence of digital media and modern biopolitical practices.

3. Research Questions

In this paper, we characterize the manifestations that the disciplinary system of biopower experiences in the context of interaction with the media spaces of modern society. This task will be carried out at two levels: the analysis of biopolitics as a phenomenon of political practices with its inherent specific attributive characteristics, and the study of media as a space of communication between different social groups and individuals mediated by different technical means, in which the posing, discussion and reflection of socially significant issues takes place.

4. Purpose of the Study

The article is devoted to the analysis of biopolitical practices as a mechanism for manipulating desires and needs in the context of the transformation of media scenarios of modern society.

5. Research Methods

In modern postmodern science, the term “biopolitics” is widely used. In accordance with Foucaultian views, in modern society, biopolitics replaces the usual forms of ruling, when the disciplinary and controlling principle in relations with the individual changes to power over a person as a living being (Samovol’nova, 2017). The generation of a new paradigm of power, from Foucault's point of view, was dictated by the need for the further development of capitalist and liberal societies, because expanded economic production required not only the participation of obedient bodies in the process of creating added value, but also the correlation of phenomena associated with the population.

On the other hand, McLuhan (2015) several decades ago expressed the idea that social progress is mediated not so much by economic, political or cultural factors as by communication channels (media), on the basis of which people communicate. The means of communication act as external extensions of the individual, as an extension of his body. Thus, the connection of biopolitics (impact on the body) with media (continuation of the human body, according to McLuhan) seems to us more than convincing. Of the theories and concepts of media existing in modern science (semiotic, critical, structural-functional), it is the structural-functional, which focuses on the stabilizing effect of mass communication, seems to us the most convincing.

6. Findings

At the beginning of the New Time, from the point of view of Foucault, a new type of power begins to form, the core element of which is disciplinary control over the human body. This body must be made obedient in order to be extracted from it through drill, supervision and constant observation of economic utility. In the second half of the 19th century, the disciplinary type of power changes to power, which appeals to the individual not as a subordinate object, but as a being with his own needs, desires and interests (as cited in Samovol’nova, 2017). The power that allows you to live and makes you die is replaced by the power that makes you live and allows you to die (Dillon, 2019). Foucault points out three directions towards which this type of coercion is oriented. Firstly, these are issues related to the reproduction of the population (fertility, mortality, diseases and hygiene), to which the social system reacts with the emergence of health care, the beauty industry, catering, etc. Secondly, these are cases associated with the biological neutralization of individuals (disability, old age and death), which was actualized in the emergence of the social insurance system, pension security and the whole industry of funeral services. Thirdly, the most important biopolitical area is the impact on humans of the environment, both artificial (urban environment) and natural. From the point of view of Foucault, the above phenomena (death or illness) cannot be predicted at the individual level, but if we consider them from the point of view of large masses of people and over long time intervals, then in this aspect the state can not only predict the consequences of these “biotic »Phenomena, but also to adequately influence their dynamics (Samovol’nova, 2017). As rightly noted by Samovol’nova (2017), “despite the fact that both techniques, disciplinary and regulatory, seem to relate to different types of individual management, nevertheless, they not only do not exclude each other, but in most cases complement each other” (p. 263). An example is a city where the authorities, on the one hand, establish strict laws that restrict people's self-expression, and, on the other hand, form the infrastructure to

support their biological existence (hospitals, shops, restaurants, water supply, sewage) and aging (Stark, 2019). Some scholars characterize such management practices as “post-democracy” (Esposito, 2019).

In his works, Foucault concludes that modern Western civilization has long entered the phase of biopolitics. The task of managing large masses began to be solved by the state through the mechanism of manipulation of “desires”, which in the Middle Ages and Modern Times were viewed negatively, as leading a person astray from the right path (in the Middle Ages - the ways of communicating with God, in Modern Times - the ways of rational understanding of the world), now, managing needs in the direction necessary for the state is becoming the most important tool for keeping the population in obedience (Gallyamov, 2019). Biopower functions in such a way that an object subject to power does not feel any pressure on itself, and perceives what is happening as a completely normal and natural state for itself (Alasaniya, 2018). However, at the same time, the invisible impact does not cease to be an impact. It is appropriate to give the following example here: if a person does not feel the force of gravity, this does not mean that it does not exist. Even Marcuse (1991) noted that one of the mechanisms of the existence of modern capitalist society is the manipulation of human needs by both satisfying existing ones and, more importantly, imposing new ones. Biopolitics strives for a way of management that maximizes satisfaction of needs (Arceneaux, 2020). In this sense, the concept of “biopolitics” has some common points of coincidence with the concept of “soft power”, which operates not with harsh methods of coercion, but with non-violent instruments of forming attractiveness and sympathy (Marsha & Soedrajat, 2019). Among the tools of soft power, education, culture and ideology come out on top (Rusakova, 2010).

It is important to note that the concepts of “biopolitics” and “biopower” are actually synonymous (Yarkeev, 2020), while they are united with “soft power” by the “invisible” nature of the impact on the object of subordination.

From the point of view of Foucault, the management system of society is formed on the basis of three types of relations - knowledge, power and ethos, represented by social institutions of science, politics and ethics. Despite the fact that these relations are different types of activity, they interact in the closest way with each other, creating an inseparable whole. As Gallyamov (2019), “that the development of science leads to the fact that goals of a political, economic and social nature play an increasing role in it, in this case we are dealing with a politicized science” (p. 103). Foucault himself, in his work, describes in some detail the relationship of the above social practices, so it seems to us more innovative to focus our attention on other aspects of the functioning of biopower. And if, for example, the connection between biopolitics and economics has already been considered (Zhelmin, 2019), then there are practically no works on the influence of biopolitical practices on the media in Russian science.

By media we mean the space of communication between various social groups and individuals mediated by various technical means, in which socially significant issues are posed, discussed and reflected. Within the framework of structural functionalism, which is close to us, media are considered as one of the most important tools for maintaining the functioning of the social system through the formation of a holistic picture of the life of society. In addition, the media perform a number of important functions, such as informing (informing people about events in the world and society), compensatory (distracting the audience's attention from everyday problems), mobilizing (rallying people to solve certain socially significant problems). Now we would like to highlight several significant characteristics of modern media.

First, the most important feature of the media is that the technology of messaging is not neutral, it affects our perception of the world around us and thereby mediates it.

Secondly, modern media drifts more and more away from rational constructions of explaining reality to emotional ones, which, on the whole, is consistent with biopower strategies. Previously, management methods were based on rationality (the concept of "Enlightenment"). Now, the lower the level of rationality, the more effective the impact on the masses. At present, rational motives do not work, since such schemes do not take into account the nature of a person who, for purely physiological reasons, wants to live by moods and emotions. On the other hand, rationality is not possible now, since the thinking of a modern person is mosaic. This was noted by Marshal McLuhan (as cited in Cole, 2018). A feature of such thinking is the ability of a person to perceive the world only through short, vivid images and visual series. Any word can evoke a whole picture of images associated with it. At the same time, within the framework of such thinking, a person, even for a minute, cannot keep the subject of thought, constantly jumps from topic to topic, completely ignoring the cause-effect relationship. Although from the outside the speech of the bearer of such thinking may seem "scientific-like" and "logical", however, there is no most important thing that distinguishes logical thinking from clip thinking - foundations and causal transitions. There is a version that once upon a time there was a so-called pralogical thinking that ignored the logical laws of contradiction and followed the law of participation (the law of participation). Because of this, in the thinking of primitive people, ideas were combined differently than in the thinking of a modern person (Lase, 2020). Incredible, but true: the thinking of the majority of citizens, whose brains are "brainwashed" by the modern media, returns to typically archaic forms. Thus, the task of politics at the present time is to create corridors for the realization of instincts within the framework of emotional clip thinking.

Thirdly, the tendency of modern society, recorded by neo-Marxists, is the gradual degradation of spiritual values and their replacement by needs of an exclusively material nature, while the self-realization of the individual gives way to false pseudo-self-realization, where the demonstration of one's own status through ostentatious consumption comes first. According to Stoyan (2018), "The mass person is involved in an endless consumer race" (p. 62). And if, for example, I.N. Sidorenko believes that this form of government is both "the enslavement of nature and the enslavement of man, which turns him into a faceless unit of production relations" (Sidorenko, 2017, p. 132), then we believe that in this case the state simply changes its strategy management of society, responding to the changed conditions of capitalist production. Man is 90% a living body, so the task of politics is to streamline biological instincts. Politics is reduced to the manipulation of multiple "desubjective" subjects, "who do not have their own stable subjectivity" (Tomiltseva, 2016, p. 82)

Fourth, due to the spread of the Internet and the growing influence of digital technologies, the media space is being reformatted. If earlier (at the beginning of the 20th century) people were grouped around any print media in accordance with their class rational interests, now there is a segmentation of target audiences into small short-lived microcommunities, which, instead of class interests, are guided by momentary desires related to entertainment or consumption. Moreover, the impact of media on today's society is so great that some authors consider the media to be the main instrument of the entire education system and socialization of a modern person (Druick, 2020).

And, finally, and most importantly, the spread of digital Internet practices leads to a shift in communicative discourses into the sphere of culture, which undermines civic confidence in political institutions, which are now losing their role of "opinion leaders".

7. Conclusion

Summing up, it should be noted that biopolitics is a way of exercising power when an object subject to the influence of power does not feel any pressure on itself and perceives what is happening as a completely normal and natural state for itself. The task of managing large masses is now being solved by the state through the mechanism of manipulating "desires", control over which is becoming the most important tool for keeping the population in subjection. It is substantiated that digital media play an essential role in programming these needs. The "willing" person begins to oust the "reasonable" person from all spheres of communicative practices. It is also proved that the reformatting of the media towards the creation of horizontal network communities, on the one hand, helps the state to better influence the "willing social body", on the other hand, it generates certain risks. As people are looking for answers to all their questions on the Internet, and the state is now losing the role of "opinion leader".

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