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ETHOLOGY OF MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

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Abstract

All social hierarchies are traditionally based on biopolitical regulation of communicative scenarios. Political regulation of human biology ranks social groups, creating a system for the distribution of natural and social benefits. If hierarchies in natural ecosystems are built on "natural" models of interconnection, then in social ones, they are based on biopolitical sublimation of trophic communication into socio-political, symbolic forms. Trophic communication through power manipulation becomes the reference model of social communication and forms all socio-political systems. Power, as a mediator between a person, nature and society, between a person and their need, produces a system of regulatory institutions. Biopower is a sacralized mechanism of simulated, political and ideological production and symbolic satisfaction of the trophic needs of the population. The media take on this function, as intermediaries between the top of the political pyramid and its producing foundation. A quantitative increase in mass media leads to a take-off of the ideological role of visual culture in the 20th–21st centuries, which captured almost the entire space of television and Internet communication. Mass media and the sublimation models of socio-trophic communication produced by them, over time lose their intermediary function, create a space of "empty" communication of the public, as the basis of civil society.

1. Introduction

The continuous complication of social systems and models of their political regulation naturally reveals insoluble contradictions that seriously reduce the effectiveness of political management at any level of the social hierarchy. Continuously arising problems and managerial failures generated by them clearly demonstrate the escalation of the uncontrollability of social and political systems. Management chaos provokes the desire of all levels of political power to operate with the biotic motives of social communication. In the conditions of permanent crises, its biotization turns out to be almost the only sustainable and effective mechanism for stabilizing the situation at all levels of political interaction. Intuitive, and sometimes even frankly instinctive impulses of power, are increasingly prompting it to rely on fundamental biotic factors as basal, pre-social motivators of actions at all levels of the social hierarchy. Such, much less costly, biotic "crisis management" guarantees the authorities greater efficiency compared to the traditional one, based solely on social laws. Unfortunately, an objective scientific understanding of the underlying biotic mechanisms of formation and implementation of such political and managerial methods, oppressed by complexes of "civilizational superiority", is still in its infancy, creating a field of socio-political risks that threaten the authorities with destabilization and complete chaos. And the methods of media presentation of these biotic models for optimizing social interaction are also far from the minimum acceptable level of visibility, objectivity and expediency.

2. Problem Statement

Social hierarchies are the result of a person's alienation from natural forms of communication, involving the formation of stratifying forms of activity, ranking ideological systems of their justification, sacralization, legitimation, subsequent media promotion and monitoring, as well as the inevitable transformation of the space of generic relations into an institutional-hierarchized, politicized environment, in which biotic intraspecific and interspecific relationships are stimulated.

3. Research Questions

The solution to the stated problem involves consideration of a number of tasks:

- analysis of the principles of formation of social and political hierarchies, as well as consideration of their natural and institutional premises;
- revealing the features of media scenarios for transformation of biopolitics and its characteristic models of symbolic reproduction of social hierarchies.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to analyze the ethological principles of transformation of social hierarchies, as well as to study the biopolitical forms of their media sublimation in the institutional landscape and geopolitical space of a modern consumer society.

5. Research Methods

The study of the institutional topology of social spaces, as well as the biopolitical scenarios of their hierarchization, are historically built by civilization on the basis of sacralization, socialization, and then politicization of natural areas and their inherent scenarios of trophic communication. Therefore, as one of the methodological principles of the study Foucault's "methodological nominalism" (Foucault, 1999) will be used. He outlines the main points of this research strategy in his work "To oversee and punish", when he introduces the in all senses bipolitical concept of "disciplinarity" and carries out a detailed analysis of the functioning of disciplinary spaces represented by the corps of leading repressive social institutions that historically implement biopolitical practices. Developing his structuralist preferences, in which, among other things, phenomenology, psychoanalysis and hermeneutics are successfully combined, M. Foucault denies the existence of universals, which allows him to identify the essential genesis of repressive, institutional socio-political practice through discursive formations. Foucault's methodological developments are necessarily associated with a set of ideas presented by Western postmodern philosophical discourse, which, in the context of examining individual and social conflicts of the 20th and early 21st centuries, managed to comprehensively consider a set of interrelated research "metaphors" (rhizome, root, tree, scriptor, trace, newspeak), deconstructing traditional forms of scientific knowledge of social practice, including institutional and hierarchical principles of biopolitical civilization. These are: Deleuze and Guattari (2008), Baudrillard (2017), Orwell (2017).

6. Findings

The social hierarchies formed within the framework of civilization – "much more than power, and, of course, much more than inequality" (Haynes, & Hickel, 2016, p. 1), allow for regulating biopolitical scenarios of human intraspecific and interspecific communication, which are most relevant in the areas of hygiene, reproduction, sexuality and nutrition. In addition, they provide an opportunity to differentiate social groups and rank them according to their places in the system of distribution of natural resources and civilizational benefits. From a biological point of view, such hierarchies have, first of all, trophic determination and provide stability and reproducibility of ecosystems. However, being sublimated by the system of social stratification, they show a tendency towards transformation (degradation) of the material-trophic principle of interaction. If in natural ecosystems the hierarchy is built on the above-mentioned "natural" models of interconnection and interchange, then in the social environment it turns out to be connected with the mechanisms of biopolitical sublimation of trophic communication into political, social, symbolic forms. The result of such processes is the sociocultural and biopolitical transformation of conspicuous consumption, which is also characteristic of prehuman communities, into a symbolic consumption of material and communicative resources. A logical result of such transformations is the formation of a hierarchized, and then institutionalized, inherently biopolitical space of power – a state. Food and all the social rituals associated with it (production, cooking, consumption, exchange and disposal) as the most important "biopolitical asset" (Conroy, 2019, p. 470) turn into the basic symbols of "tactics of colonialism" (Lewis, 2018, p. 427) and biopower.

In a concentrated form, they represent the essence of social violence as a form of power regulation of the "commodity" cycle (extraction/production, distribution, exchange and consumption) of natural goods that ensure the survival of an organism and the whole species. In fact, power, in its personified and institutional forms, initially organizes social and especially political communication as biotic, and more precisely, trophic. Over time, it begins to be understood as "a regime of material distribution that makes some lives worth living, and rejects others until death" (Taylor, 2018, p. 49). It is with such meanings that all processes of production, distribution of exchange and consumption of goods are purposefully loaded. Along the way, the authorities initially biotize morality, ethics, religion, culture, science, economics, politics, war and all other forms of social communication. In such a classic model, power historically acts as an institutional, regulatory mediator between a person and their need, as well as between a person and the natural, and later the social environment of their being. The very availability of food, its assortment, quality, methods of preparation, consumption and utilization rituals, not only become the biopolitical basis for the formation of the institutional environment, but also give rise to all scenarios of communication within it. Thus, the institutional "food management is compiled into biopolitical life management strategies, including the lives of the hungry poor who are "allowed to die", because commercial interests crowd out human needs" (Nally, 2011, p. 37). Under such conditions, food itself gradually loses its material, resource-biotic function, giving way to simulated political and ideological relations directly related to the stages of the social movement of food in civilized, institutional and political environments. As a result, the emergence in the space of power of a particular model of social relations is in itself initially a form directly referring to the presence/absence of food, which means that any change in the scenarios of social communication automatically involves transformation of the possibility of trophic satisfaction. Thus, by sublimating the trophic relations into social, and then into political and ideological ones, the government actually identifies such relations not so much with reality as with the political and ideological possibility of food satisfaction in the post-natural, that is, in the symbolic-symbolic, media form. All socio-political rituals are first transformed into social signs of the formal presence and possession of "food", and then into institutional simulacra of its symbolic consumption. Such a biopolitical status of trophic resources gives reason to consider it their leading communicative simulacrum, which creates a stable illusion not only of the availability of food, but even of any possible forms of its ritual sociocultural and political "consumption".

It is not surprising that food is gradually losing its natural form, for the sake of growth of the symbolic form. Therefore, biopower has a need to create a civilizational, sacralized, sociocultural mechanism for the continuous simulative, political and ideological satisfaction of the trophic needs of an increasing number of people in a ritual and symbolic form. Just for this reason, the instrumental mind of the New Age, generated primarily by biopower, urgently requires creation of a universal institutional infrastructure and mediator between the biopower itself and the continuously growing number of consumers of symbolic (simulated) food. Mass media become such a symbolic mediator, which not only acts as "natural" (consumer) intermediaries between the power top of the sociopolitical (trophic) pyramid and its producing (productive) base, but also naturally turns out to be part of the "new mediated mechanism <...> of food management" (Barnes, 2017, p. 169). And since under such conditions it is the hunger mentioned above that paradoxically becomes one of the fundamental, global problems of the post-industrial humanity, the mass media layer also exhibits a steady tendency to a quantitative increase. What infinitely multiplies

the ritual scenarios of a simulated, political and ideological, but, at its core, trophic satisfaction of the needs of the production masses, historically and logically completing the process of "symbolic violence" (Lumsden & Morgan, 2017, p. 926). It is these processes that led to an unprecedented rise in the 20th and 21st centuries of the socio-political and ideological significance of visual culture, which today has captured the simulated, political and ideological space of television and Internet communications. Moreover, similar processes, paradoxically, are characteristic of both the rich and relatively prosperous biopolitical "areas" and the poorest, and therefore completely "naturally" starving part of humanity.

At the same time, we are witnessing a widespread degradation, and in places, an almost complete loss of the natural, biotic skills of "seeing" the real world of the average person who unconsciously flees from reality, refusing to focus on real objects and operate on shapes, sizes, colors, smells, tastes of the world around them. These initially biosocial qualities of the subject environment become the leading forms of the ritual, political and ideological sublimation of human biotic requests "as an essential political category" (Nir, 2018, p. 84) into media technologies for their replacement. In many ways, the deliberate, media channeling of the average person's attention to the world of simulated socio-trophic illusions explains their growing apathy for the real world around them, which turns into the displacement of the generic nature of a person into virtual worlds, with their unlimited visual (simulated trophic) hierarchical and politicized consumption of the world. Thus, the mass media themselves, as full-fledged symbols of "communicative capitalism" (Zwick & Bradshaw, 2016, p. 91) and the sublimation models of social-trophic communication produced by them, lose their real mediating function over time. They create an expanding space of "empty" communication around themselves and produce a biotocially relevant debiotized public, as the basis of a post-modern civil society and a reliable trophic resource of media power. That is why "politicians' awareness of the importance of the media is becoming more sophisticated in the face of rapidly evolving media technology and control" (Negrine, 1994, p. 4). Such a situation fundamentally transforms the nature, content and technologies of both natural and social communication, sublimating them within exclusively biopolitical scenarios. This gives them the status of the only factor capable of "arbitrarily" in mass media form ontologizing or deontologizing any natural, social, or other possible types of hierarchical reality. This is the essence and the civilizational mission of power as a system of biopolitical control over the evolution of social hierarchies.

The immediate task of media operators produced and controlled by the authorities is to formulate and provide political and ideological services for a large-scale system of unconscious trophic socialization of the population, which in rationalized, civilizational, particular and corporate forms is presented in the form of religion, science, art, sports, ideology, politics, and other institutions, one way or another consolidating and developing forms of socio-political, as, first of all, trophic inequality. Such media games of power distract the attention of the population from the real processes of the natural trophic determination of socio-political relations and "pave the way for subsequent biopolitical and eugenic" (Schwanebeck, 2019, p. 2) transformations of the simulated media strategies serving the government. As a result, imitation rituals created and instilled by the authorities, which continuously refer the individual to the media simulation of food satisfaction, turn into the leading stratifying attribute of this type of rule. The totality of clearly and latently controlled by the authorities mass media produces "stereotypes in the collective consciousness of citizens" (Rölle, 2017, p. 232), creates the prerequisites for the formation and maintenance

in a "smoldering" state of social conflicts at all levels of political hierarchies. Since it is precisely in such an atmosphere of the "war of all against all" that the authorities manage to demonstrate their eternal relevance, it is most effective and profitable to force real trophic contradictions into the space of media and virtual confrontation. The emergence of media "as a co-producer of social power relations" (Gouma & Dorer, 2019, p. 345) in conjunction with politics positions the union of these institutions as one of the most important biopolitical tools (real, or simulated) to increase the manageability and predictability of the social system. So, in the biopolitized space of media communication, virtual worlds are constantly being created and multiplied, which irrevocably not only lose their natural content, but, gradually, lose all biotic conditioning and expediency, for the sake of apparent political necessity and simulated effectiveness.

7. Conclusion

Compared to the classical forms of political governance, which for thousands of years have relied on systematic and organized violence against their subjects, modern media, largely "post-political", biopower prefers to broadcast its dominance to the population in a latent, popular, and sometimes openly entertaining form. Such a configuration of socio-trophic relations in institutional hierarchies gives rise to new qualities of politics, which is extremely globalized and turns political power into an absolutely relevant, and, most importantly, universal, homogenized media-trophic product. At the same time, the audience itself undergoes a similar transformation, which is now distinguished by increased ideological indifference, emphasized by external apoliticality, demonstrative absenteeism, collectively sublimated in its "political omnivorousness".

Thus, the steady tendency noted by experts to escalate the use of unconscious biopolitical arguments, both in official and everyday communicative practice, indisputably indicates that political management has achieved a fundamentally new quality. One of its inalienable attributes is modern mass media that permanently broadcasts "the idea of cultural trauma shared by large societies" (Meek, 2016, p. 91). Of course, it should be recognized that mass media, through continuous indirect visual propaganda of violence, bioterrorism, ecoterrorism and other extreme biopolitical strategies, partly "relieve" people of acute sensations of anxiety and fear as clear signs of basal, biotic "survival strategies" (Mansano & Nalli, 2018, p. 85). But, acting as a vaccine, they, at the same time, constantly keep the masses waiting for even more extreme events and even tougher retaliatory actions by the authorities, which is why biopolitical methods are becoming an integral, ordinary part of the daily lives of billions of people around the world.

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