

THE ROLE AND SPECIFICS OF SOCIAL CONTROL IN TRANSFORMING SOCIETIES

UDC 316.422

Olga A. Obryvalina*

Lomonosov Moscow State University, Faculty of Sociology, Moscow, Russia
E-mail: olgaobryvalina@gmail.com

Abstract. *The article discusses some trends in the development of transitional societies and the role of social control in social, economic and political changes. Firstly, the author claims the need for new criteria of modernization, the clear definition of its intermediate and ultimate goals and control of their realization. And secondly, the positive and negative influence of social control on social reformation is argued.*

Key words: *social control, modernization, criteria of progress, westernization.*

The popularity of modernization discourse in modern Russia can hardly be overestimated. The problems of transformation of social, economic, political institutions, the essence of culture and spiritual values occupies everyone - from students to academics. Use of terms like "transformation", "modernization", "transitional" or 'transitional society" in scientific papers has become a matter of courtesy. However, the ongoing processes are being qualified in many ways and plenty of opinions are being voiced, sometimes they even contradict each other. Only one thing is without doubt - we are moving on. The question is – in what direction?

An analysis of the various interpretations of modernization shows that they are of axiological nature (unlike the concept of "transformation") and point to various "improvements" and "progressive change". P. Sztompka suggests three interpretations of the term modernization: as a synonym of progress, as the transition from traditional society to an industrial (modern) and as the efforts of the backward countries to catch up with advanced into a single global dimension (Štompka, 1996). We will consider these aspects in detail.

The notion of modernization as a means to ensure the progressive development of society and its content is widespread in the public consciousness. It is based on the same grounds as the theoretical concepts of classic sociology. According to the theory of a pro-

Received March 18, 2013

* Ph.D. student

gress movement towards modernity is the inevitable fate of all societies, to varying degrees and at different speeds to exercise this movement, which has an organic nature, defined by an endogenous mechanism for the development of every society (Poljikova, 2010). Capitalist and industrial societies were the "ideal-typical construction" for modernizing traditional societies. And priority was given to economic reforms.

Discrepancy of theoretical models based on the above-mentioned principles to the reality was revealed in the first half of the 20th century, and by mid-century those models also lost their scientific significance. Meanwhile we are witnessing the further creation of modernization projects built on the old scheme, not taking into account scientific advice received by sociologists and social philosophers for almost a century ago.

The universal script of modernization was revised. "Experience of expanding modernization processes in different regions of the world has shown that the modernization process and its results were strongly influenced by their own socio-cultural traditions (K. Polanyi, E. Shils, S. Eisenstadt, etc.)". (Лыкова, 2010). Barrington Moore, describes modernization as "a spontaneous process" which results has no regulatory nature and can take a variety of economic and social forms (Poljikova, 2010). Then you need to understand the current content of progressive social development, its symptoms, criteria and determinants. Without this the process of modernization, indeed, remains spontaneous and uncontrolled.

Understanding of modernization as the transition from traditional society to an industrial one is a well-established view that has a long history and is supported by a relevant theoretical and methodological scientific tradition. However, nowadays several researchers consider that revision of the concept of modernization and redefinition of the concept are required. In particular, they propose such terms as "information" or "post-industrial" modernization (Popov, 2010). R. Inglehart and C. Welzel note that industrial and postindustrial modernizations are differently directed. The first brings bureaucracy and secularization. The second emphasizes individual autonomy and self-expression values. Both alter the power of cultural orientation of people, but in different directions (Popov, 2010). D. Hancock, also stresses the importance of political change in post-industrial modernization (Popov, 2010). And E.A. Alampay defines information technology as an additional dimension of modernization in the information society which acts as a definite basis for a new production of modernization ideology (Popov, 2010).

Relationships between societies-leaders and their followers is the third aspect of modernization, which P. Sztompka proposed. In the first societies we may see "organic", "adaptive", "searching" modernization, germinating from within as a result of natural development of society. It is usually "bottom-oriented" rather than exclusively run by the political will of the elite. Societies-followers implement "catch-up", "delayed" modernization, conducted "from above".

The Western countries were the driving force of modernization for a long time. They were providing samples of "modern" social institutions for societies-followers and were developing cultural expansion. As the negative aspects of this model of modernization we may mention threats to traditional culture, the dangerous intensification of social inequality as a result of the emergence of "enclaves of modernity", copy of stereotypes already discarded by Western civilization (and, accordingly, the repetition of made mistakes), the disintegration of the old mechanisms for maintaining of social order along with impossibility of quickly introducing new (Fedotova, 2010).

At the beginning of the 20th century, it became clear that modernization cannot have the only one scenario. So there is still the question which criteria should be used for the selection of political, economic and socio-cultural standards.

According to experts, the governmental circles and the elite are responsible for this choice in the contemporary world. They define the shape of post-industrial modernization. And our country is no exception. Russian society is focused on the modernization by government institutions, which manifests itself in promoting economic development and social mobilization. And it means that we may expect the growth potential for conflict in society originating from the backlog of political institutions on the pace of social and economic changes and the emergence of "internal structural gaps": between the few very rich and the masses of poor, between educated and uneducated, between urban and rural residents, between cosmopolitans, nationalists and nativists, between modernity and tradition, between rulers and ruled (Полякова, 2010).

Analyzing the situation in modern Russia, experts point out that its construction by "a new generation of Russian, formed on the ruins of a traditional society. This generation of mega-cities, popular culture, consumer values, extreme individualism" (Вызов, 2008). The modernization of the country occurs in a "social cocoon", and the more intense it is, the more intensely it destroys the social fabric. Mechanical changes in the economic and technological sphere are not enough for the transformation. Interiorization of social and cultural orientations of new society in the individual and mass consciousness is required. And today, the focus is shifting from the technological modernization to its subjects and the characteristics that they should have.

The project "Russian organic modernization" (Вызов, 2008) requires the formation of a new national identity. And here we are facing the dilemma of tradition-innovation in the public consciousness. So, recognizing the leading role of governments, political elites, the state societies of followers in the modernization process, R. Bendix emphasizes the strategic role of education and educated people who want to use advanced ideas and techniques to implement the modernization and to reconcile the strength shown by the society-pioneer with the values laid down in the local cultural tradition (Полякова, 2008).

There is a point of view that modernization is accompanied by the spread of a new culture - the culture of "modernity" which implies that rationalistic actions dominate individual and mass behavior, orientations on personal success are approved, traditional barriers and traditional ways of regulation are removed, a new type of man is ready for a permanent change and the ability to initiate changes appears (Bondarenko, 2010).

The political class should not be the only driving force of modernization, but also the actors of a special type – a "creative class", which includes the carrier of a special type of social behavior - an innovative, "venture", risk-averse, capable of self-organization and creating the necessary forms of solidarity based on initiative and trust (Komf, 2010).

Cultural gaps that appeared in Russian society in the 20th century have jeopardized the social identity of the majority of Russians, facilitated the development of indifference, apathy and ideological nihilism. On the other hand, an ideological vacuum was quickly filled with actualized ideas of national and religious intolerance, ethnic animosity (Лыкова, 2010). The restoration of tradition as a significant agent of social integration along with a critical rethinking of the traditionalist-oriented ideologies that serve as a justification for ethnic and intercultural strife are decisive for the future of the nation.

Thus, summing up the consideration of the essence of modernization, its features at the present stage of history, as well as taking into account the specifics of the Russian historical path, we can conclude that the modernization of Russian society should start with the definition of basic spiritual and moral and ideological values and the creation of a mechanism for their reproduction. The realization of these goals is closely linked to the creation of an effective mechanism of social control.

Social control in the broadest sense we understand as the mechanism of maintaining the stable functioning of the social system. An inalienable part of this mechanism is a set of standards of behavior for the members of society and the values in which they take root. The strategies of modernization, any given reform of the established order ultimately involves the society's system of values and standards and a system of social control which has to adapt to changing circumstances. Otherwise, the social control activities would slow the modernization down or even interrupt it because by nature this system is tuned to tradition and an ideal paragon of order defined by it.

Taken widely, social control not only protects society from deviant behavior but also takes part in establishing favorable conditions for implementation of behavior subjected to social standards. So, it may and must provide course-keeping stability in social reform. Therefore, the success of the transition from one state of society to another largely depends on the efficiency of all the components of social control and its various types: institutional and non-institutional control, formal and informal, outer and inner, state and social control.

The elaboration of the modernization project is likely the most important stage, since it sets the strategic direction of social transformation which largely determines the future of the country and its people. However, the task requires well-honed work of the mechanism of social control that allow you to coordinate the actions of all the agents of modernization, to monitor its course and to indicate possible deviations.

The concept of social control is currently under discussion and falls within two main approaches: of consensus and of conflict. Accepting the orderly structure of social relations and interactions on the basis of a complex of standards and values implies the understanding of social control as a self-regulation mechanism of social systems aimed at maintaining order by stimulating generally approved behavior and limiting deviations. In the realm of the second approach, social control is an element of suppressive manipulating influence of a superior group over subordinates.

In practice these theoretical models are presented simultaneously in various combinations. Given that for solving the problems of modernization in the country there should be unity of the active part of society ready to implement the strategy of modernization as its main material interest for a long time and strategically-minded elite that directs the course of transformation, both mechanisms of social control must operate simultaneously and coherently.

But in Russia the political system traditionally defines a vector of not only political but also social, economic and cultural changes. Thus implementation of social control by the political elite is of great significance. The role of government actors of modernization increases also due to the fact that the country faced "detraditionalization", and a new national identity was just beginning to appear; increased potential for conflict is also obvious (strained relations between ethnic, socio-economic groups). In this case, not to discredit their targets in the face of most citizens, the elite should not only be strategically

minded, but also socially responsible (Bondarenko, 2010). The mechanism of social control at any moment may be encroached by a group of people in power, and be transformed into a tool for supporting their superior position. So, not to fall under the pressure of false aims imposed by small social groups acting as their own selector, it is necessary to correlate the social life transformation process with the exterior absolute. This will provide a clear vision of direction and aims of the process. It is necessary because the changes involve the tradition that formerly provided social stability, and create a basis for a new one, the one that will be handed over to future generations.

REFERENCES

1. Bondarenko V.I. Osnovnye protivorechiya i faktory modernizacionnykh processov rossijskogo obshchestva // «Sorokinskiye chtenia – 2010»: Sbornik tezisov. – M.: MAKS Press, 2010.
2. Vyizov L.G. «Эрона Putina: ot krizisa cennostej k krizisu institutov» // Svobodnaya mysl'. № 4. 2008.
3. Komf E.V. Modernizacija: celi i sub'ekty // «Sorokinskiye chtenia – 2010»: Sbornik tezisov. – M.: MAKS Press, 2010.
4. Ljukova V.V. Sociokul'turnye tradicii sovremennoj Rossii: sintez tradicionalizma i postmodernizma? // «Sorokinskiye chtenia – 2010»: Sbornik tezisov. – M.: MAKS Press, 2010.
5. Poljakova N.L. Issledovanie form i processov modernizacii: vklad istoricheskoye sociologii // Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta. Seriya 18. Sociologiya i politologiya. 2010. №4.
6. Popov A.V. Specifika informacionnoj modernizacii v sovremennom obshchestve // «Sorokinskiye chtenia – 2010»: Sbornik tezisov. – M.: MAKS Press, 2010.
7. Fedotova V.G. Global'nyy mir i modernizacija // Filosofskie nauki. 2000. №1.
8. Štompka P. Sociologija social'nyh izmenenij. - M.: Aspekt Press, 1996.

ULOGA I SPECIFIČNOSTI DRUŠTVENE KONTROLE U TRANZICIONIM DRUŠTVIMA

Olga A. Obryvalina

Članak razmatra neke trendove u razvoju tranzisionih društava i ulogu društvene kontrole u društvenim, ekonomskim i političkim promenama. Prvo, autor naglašava potrebu za novim kriterijumima modernizacije, jasno definisanje njenih trenutnih i krajnjih, dugoročnih ciljeva i kontrolu njihove realizacije. I drugo, razmatra se pozitivni i negativni uticaj društvene kontrole na socijalne reforme.

Ključne reči: društvena kontrola, modernizacija, kriterijumi napretka, vesternizacija.