

## The Phenomenon of "Virtualization" of the World in Modern Society

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**Abstract.** *Post-industrial society is also defined as a "post-class" society, reflecting the breakdown of the stable social structures and identities characteristic of industrial society. If before the status of an individual in a society was determined by his place in the economic structure, that is, by the class affiliation to which all other social characteristics were subordinated, now the status characteristic of the individual is determined by a multitude of factors, among which the increasing role is played by education and the level of culture (according to P. Bourdieu "cultural capital"). On this basis, D. Bell and several other Western sociologists put forward the idea of a new "service" class.*

**Keywords:** post-industrial society, information society, social space, virtualization.

Post-industrial society is the stage of society when the economy has shifted from the primary production of goods to the production of services, information and knowledge are the dominant productive resource, scientific development has become the main driving force of the economy, the most valuable qualities are the level of education, professionalism, learning and creativity of the worker.

The service sector accounts for much more than half of GDP in post-industrial countries. Now the post-industrial countries include the United States (80% of the US GDP, 2002), the EU countries (service sector - 69.4% of GDP, 2004), Japan (67.7% of GDP, 2001).

The concepts of the information society, posteconomic society, postmodernism, the "third wave" are close to post-industrial theory. Some futurologists believe that post-industrialism is only a prologue to the transition to a "posthuman" phase of the development of terrestrial civilization.

The term "post-industrialism" was introduced at the beginning of the 20th century by A. Coomaraswamy, who specialized in pre-industrial development of Asian countries. In the modern sense, this term was first used in the late 1950s. The concept of a postindustrial society was widely accepted as a result of the work of Harvard University professor D. Bell, in particular, after the publication in 1973 of his book "The Coming Postindustrial Society".<sup>1</sup>

Modern society has a number of definitions: "post-economic" (P. Drucker), "super-industrial" or "third wave society" (A. Toffler), "programmable" (A. Touraine), "service class society" (R. Dahrendorf), "Scientific" (M. Poniatowski), "service civilization" (J. Fourastie), "information-computer" (I. Massuda), "information" (F. Mahlup and T. Umesao), "informational" (M. Castells), "telematic society" (D. Martin), "technotronic" (Z. Brzezinski).

The American social philosopher Daniel Bell, a representative of the scientific and technocratic direction of social philosophy, defined that "postindustrial society means the emergence of new axial structures and principles: the transition from a commodity-producing society to an information society or

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Irina V. Vasenina, Natalia S. Kuleshova, Gennadi B. Pronchev, "Verbal Aggression in Virtual Social Environments", in *Astra Salvensis*, VI (2018), Special Issue, p. 31.

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knowledge society, and the forms of knowledge shift along the abstraction axis from empiricism ..."<sup>2</sup>

The work of D. Bell "The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting" was published in 1973. In this work, the characteristics of a new type of society were given as a new stage of social evolution, and the dominant elements of a new social structure were identified. Post-industrial society is defined by Bell as an objective social reality, the logical construction of which helps to comprehend the modern reality that embodied the results of changes. The concept of a postindustrial society is not a description of existing society, but an instrument of theoretical analysis.

American futurist Alvin Toffler called the emerging civilization "the society of the third wave," combining the concepts of "information technology and culture" in such works as "Shock of the Future" (1972), "Third Wave" (1980) and "Metamorphoses of Power" (1990). He combined the ongoing changes with the impending new "cultural wave." From his point of view, now people live in the era of collision of cultural waves. The new wave, being highly technological, is anti-industrial with its worldview, its concept of time, space, logic and causality. Toffler quite clearly defined the figurative, demassified, virtual character of the emerging sociality. Such features are inherent in modern society because the main object of human activity has become a disembodied, virtual concept of "information", which leads to tangible and real human actions. Toffler described the changes as follows: "An information bomb explodes in the very thick of people, showered with shrapnel of images and radically changing both the perception of our inner world and our behavior"<sup>3</sup>. Defining modern society as "superindustrial", he notes that such a description is not entirely adequate, since "we can not squeeze the embryonic tomorrow's world into categories accepted yesterday"<sup>4</sup>.

Since the 80s, attention to the problems of the post-industrial society has significantly decreased. According to Inozemtsev V.L., one of the reasons for this is that social philosophers shifted attention to the concept of the information society and the theory of postmodernism. Inozemtsev V.L. believes that "the concept of the information society has presented its supporters the opportunity to positively determine the impending social status and allowed to make a step forward in comparison with the theory of post-industrialism"<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> D. Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting*, Moscow, 1999, p. 661. Cf. Gennadi B. Pronchev, Danila N. Monakhov, Nadezhda G. Proncheva, Aleksander P. Mikhailov, "Contemporary Virtual Social Environments as a Factor of Social Inequality Emergence," in *Astra Salvensis*, VI (2018), Special Issue, p. 207-216.

<sup>3</sup> E. Toffler, *The Third Wave*, Moscow, 2004, p. 263. Irina V. Vasenina, Natalia S. Kuleshova, Gennadi B. Pronchev, "Verbal Aggression in Virtual Social Environments", in *Astra Salvensis*, VI (2018), Special Issue, p. 31.

<sup>4</sup> E. Toffler, *The Third Wave*, Moscow, 2004, p. 263. Irina V. Vasenina, Natalia S. Kuleshova, Gennadi B. Pronchev, "Verbal Aggression in Virtual Social Environments", in *Astra Salvensis*, VI (2018), Special Issue, p. 31.

<sup>5</sup> V. A. Inozemtsev, *Prospects of post-industrial theory in a changing world. New post-industrial wave in the West: anthology*, Moscow, 1999, p. 4; Irina S. Volegzhanina, Svetlana V. Chusovlyanova, Ekaterina S. Bykadorova, Julija V. Pakhomova, "Ontology-Based Virtual Learning Environment for Academic

The concept of the information society absorbed the achievements of the postindustrial theory and found many like-minded people, having been developed in the works of J. Masouda, D. Naisbit, D. Barlow, N. Wiener, M. Porat, T. Stounier, R. Katz, M. Castells.

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