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POLITICS AND NETWORK SOCIETY

Internet as a new source of communication is widely used in politics. Along with its development we are dealing with a new image of the network policy, which I will try to show in this work. The article aims to show the dynamics of the information society. It contains terms and definitions which apply to politics in the network. The development of a new form of civilization – the information society – is an important issue which is touched in the article. I will also focus on the of network society, explaining and analyzing the phenomenon and I will show the impact of information technology on its development.

Key words: *politics, information society, network society, internet.*

Е. Канцік. Політика і інформаційне суспільство

Інтернет як нове джерело комунікації широко використовується в політиці. Разом із його розвитком ми зустрічаємося із новим, мережевим образом політики, що автор намагається продемонструвати в цій статті. Автор ставить собі за мету продемонструвати динаміку розвитку інформаційного суспільства. Поняття та дефініції, що тут представлені стосуються політики в мережі. Суттєвою проблемою є розвиток нової цивілізаційної форми – інформаційного суспільства. Автор звертає увагу на феномен мережевого суспільства, пояснює та аналізує це явище, прагнучи показати вплив інформаційних технологій на його розвиток.

Ключові слова: *політика, інформаційне суспільство, Інтернет.*

Э. Канцик. Политика и информационное общество

Интернет как новый источник коммуникации широко используется в политике. Вместе с его развитием мы встречаемся с новым, сетевым образом политики, что автор старается продемонстрировать в этой статье. Автор ставит перед собой цель продемонстрировать динамику развития информационного общества. Понятия и дефиниции, которые здесь представлены, касаются политики в сети. Существенной проблемой является развитие новой цивили-

зационной формы – информационного общества. Автор обращает внимание на феномен сетевого общества, объясняет и анализирует это явление, стараясь показать влияние информационных технологий на его развитие.

Ключевые слова: политика, информационное общество, Интернет.

In the 90s of the twentieth century a wave of social and political transformations started off. Parallel to it the information revolution has taken place, which was already known as a sign of “civilization of the third wave” – a new civilization, which was so called by American sociologist Alvin Toffler. Toffler reveals in his book the processes taking place as a result of following one after another waves of changes. The first was the dominance of agriculture, then the industrial revolution – now we have a third wave of change that defines the IT revolution [1, p. 17-24]. The changes taking place in the current world of politics, economics, technology are caused by multiple determinants, but there is also a factor linking them, namely, it is globalization.

Now we can watch the process of transformation of societies, the transition from industrial to postindustrial society. The new pattern of civilization – the network society– is coming into being. A new era -“ information era “ is dawning, which is dominated by the modern media on the top with the Internet, and it is slowly becoming an integral part of contemporary reality [2, p. 5-8]. Politics is an ambiguous term and there is no uniform definition of it. The science of politics is distinguished by many different ways of understanding the concept. The term – policy is derived from the Greek “polis, “ which meant “the city – state”. The origins of its functioning are associated with ancient Greece. Philosophy from the beginning of time involved in politics. Aristotle, for example, saw politics as statecraft, with the aim of “common good”. Understanding the policy in every period of history has evolved, now we are dealing with the modern definition of the policy. Political power is a heterogeneous phenomenon, trying to determine it one should take into account issues relating to understanding the power and its variety – political power, legitimacy, the legitimacy of power, but also the functions which are to perform in the political system [3, p. 77]. Political scientists. M. Chmaj and M. Żmigrodzka understand political power as a “mechanism taking place between certain entities of social relations

involving the possible use of sustainable and institutional coercion to compel the others for a specific make" [4, p 131-137].

In modern times democratic processes are taken place and they objectify views on the origins, function and role of politics. This may be a reflection of contemporary policy definition of Mariusz Gulczyński, political scientist who assumes that politics is the coordination of behavior of interdependent communities with conflicting interests. A broader definition of the author explains to us that "politics is the business of overcoming the conflict of interests and reconciliation of interdependent behavior of social groups by persuasion, manipulation, coercion and violence, contestation, negotiation and compromise, that serve to shaping and protecting the social order favorable to the groups according to the strength of their economic position and political influence. The realities of human history and the present show that there is no policy which is equally favorable to all"[5, p. 26].

We often come across with the modern definition of policies that theories of Max Weber present; he says that politics is "striving for a share of power or to influence the distribution of power, whether between countries or within the state, by groups of people that create a state "[6, p. 9]. Weber accepts the definition of two planes of policy: intra and interstate.

A political scientist Leszek Sobkowiak represents interesting ways of policy definition on the basis of political science and he divides it into five orientations: formally – legal, behavioral, functional, rational and postbehavioral [7, p. 59-68]. The formally – legal inclusion says that politics is an activity of state institutions. The behavioral approach takes place in the system of social relations where impacts of the ruling groups and the control of power are perceived. This policy area is closest to the citizens and it is in the media spotlight. Ambitions and desires of the key figures of the policy are watched in public life. The functional orientation consists of solving conflicts, deciding on problematic issues and distribution of goods, indicating the importance of the position of the judiciary. The rational definition means making decisions in the area of holding power (eg, government social policy), the game for power.

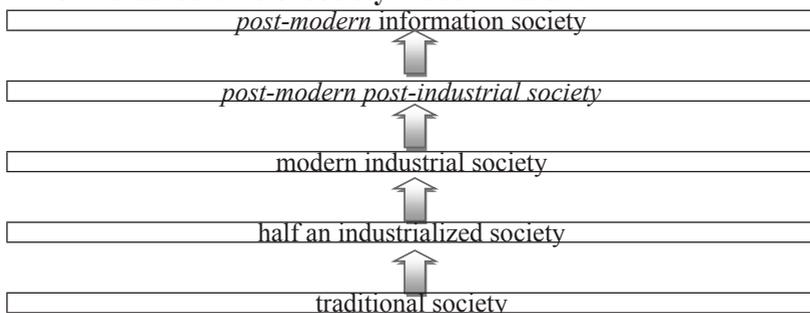
Looking at the fast-growing effects of the scientific and technological revolution in the sphere of politics and social and political life [8, p. 67] policy has changed in every respect. Forms of political participation in new media are also being developed. Practical use of the Internet in various activities of a political nature seems to be almost limitless and

extremely diverse [9, p. 49]. The new medium offers a variety of modern methods and ways that are used on a political level. The Internet plays an increasingly important role in politics, as a new way of the mass media and communication with citizens. Network electoral campaigns, information campaigns, virtual forms of meetings, electronic democracy, civil and political blogs, the formation of social movements based on the network, and all other forms of Internet communication based on the exchange of information between citizens and politicians and the civil service should be considered as new kinds of phenomenon on the ground of politics.

Contemporary social dynamics of changes caused that scientists began to seek new possibilities for describing and naming of these phenomena. Rapid growth of the mass media, IT development and progress of civilization is characterized by a new type of society that we can call the information society. There are many definitions of the term *information society* depending on the approach of the author. Society is evolving – moving through various stages of its development. Now we have to deal with the third stage – the information society, the previous stages were preindustrial and industrial ones.

It is easy to see that modern theorists noticed the next stage of social development in the information revolution. The process of modernization is sometimes identified with the changes resulting in more modern and higher forms of organization of a particular society, its economy, politics and culture [10, p. 32]. The authors of the theory write about modernization that can be a sequence of code and evolutionary changes in the traditional society, and it is transformed into a modern society.

Universal scheme of society modernization:



Source: K. Krzysztofek, M. Szczepanski, *Understanding the development of traditional societies to information ones*, Katowice 2002, p. 36.

Many scholars have studied the new social phenomena. They variously called educated society of the second half of the twentieth century – which appears in the table below.

Year	Name of Society	Author
1950	The lonely crowd	Reisman
1959	The post-capitalist society	Dahrendorf
1962	The computer revolution	Berkeley
1964	The global village	McLunhan
	Post-civilization Era	Boulding
1967	Information society	Koyama
1968	Post-modern society	Etzioni
	Technocracy	Meynaud
1972	Post-traditional society	Eisenstat
1975	Media coverage	Philips
1978	Wired society	Martin
1980	The Third Wave	Toffler
1983	Age of genes	Sylvester i Klotz
1984	Turing’s Man	Bolter
1996	Network society	Castells

Source.: T. Goban-Klas, P. Sienkiewicz, *Information society: opportunities, threats, challenges*, Warsaw 1996, p. 36-38.

The above statements represent the multiplicity of names and terms of the names of the new society, and they also show us how many researchers dealt with this issue. Certainly, we recognize that the term “information society” is the most accurate because modern society is the most saturated with technology – as never before, and at the same time it is totally dependent on it. But today it is often said that it is a “network society”.

There are plenty of new phenomena and problems arising with the change of civilization and they are relating to the emerging information society. *Information Society* – in the meaning of definition which is commonly used today in the circles of people going into the development of new areas connecting with data collection, transmission and processing of information-is a society with technical and legal instruments, but first of all the relations with the knowledge allow to use these instruments ;the society in which it is generally believed that

modern technology will not only make life easier but it makes our work more efficient [11, p. 21].

Kazimierz Krzysztofek and Marek Szczepanski define the Information Society as “a society where information is heavily educated in economical, social, cultural and political life; it is a society which has extensive mass media and information processing, forming the basis for creating the majority of the national income and provide a source of income for most people “[10, p. 170]. Information is the basic element of social life in the information society.

More complex vision of social changes is emerging in the work of the Spanish researcher Manuel Castells. He described fundamentals of network society in a monumental trilogy, “The Age of Information”, which consists of *Network society*, *Power of identity*, *End of millennium*. The sociologist fully recognized and then analyzed the modern world. His concept of “network society” is an attempt to multidimensional analysis of contemporary changes taking place in the global world. In the last years of the twentieth century three processes collided that gave a rise to a new social structure based on networks [12, p. 12]. The overlapping of the evolution of new technologies, social movements in the 60s and 70s in the twentieth century, the economic crisis and recovery attempts of capitalist economy created the network society. Under these conditions the Internet becomes a key that gives new meaning to the network that unlocked the door to a new form of society [12, p. 12]. Networks are the social bases of societies and the spread of the network is fundamentally changing the functioning and results in economical, executive and cultural processes[13, p. 467]. The network is a set of linked nodes, the node is the point at which the curve intersects itself [12, p. 12]. In this approach, the network society is interlinked nodes, the dynamic, global and open structure that is capable of infinite expansion. The Internet is its “material base” and a vehicle of changes”. Castells writes :”Although you do not care about the network, it will take care of you. In fact, as long as you want to live in society, you will have to deal with the public network. We live in the galaxy of the Internet” [12, p. 12].

“Information Age” – in Castells’s understanding – is the development of Internet, telecommunications, information technology, genetic engineering. As the starting point of his deliberations he makes the transformation of material culture, which is influenced by the

development of information technology. Spanish sociologist shows the breakthrough that was the discovery of the Internet and the jumping social development. The definition of *society* is also changing. After the transition from industrial society, a new information society is emerging, whose basic structure is network. Occurring in the network society the phenomenon also takes on a new meaning – we are dealing with the information economy, the constant flow of information, business network and network staff. Castells describes the new meaning of time and space, where space is a space of flows, the time, in turn, is often timeless. Communication between the points is a condition of manufacture, the existence and development of opportunities of individual networks. A dynamic social structure makes that cessation of communication can lead to alienation of units. The development of information technology has also impact on the policy, where the political scene is the space of the media because the information gets into the circulation through them. Castells writes that the new stage is the “information age” and the network society is a new experience. Catalan sociologist finds that violence is less important aspect of power because it is not effective and destructive for human relations that are the essence of communication. The power cannot be impossible without the communication. The researcher informs us that power and its holding consists in the ability to influence the minds of the public. Castells has no doubts that this situation has always been the same, he is intrigued what is the power in the network society, hypercommunicative one, where the phenomenon of mass communications takes place, when an individual with the help of the Internet can be not only a recipient but also the sender of the information [14]. This book is the key to understanding that contemporary politics are media politics and they aim not to the physical control of the media but the ability to use the media to direct the political agenda.

Manuel Castells is not the only researcher of the network society. Darin Barney is also dealing with this issue, sometimes on the basis of the works of Castells. *Network Society* by Barney shows the influence of technologies on politics, sociology, economics and its application in other areas. A researcher is dealing with the communications network society issues, he often cites quotations from books of Castells, sometimes he takes issue with him. Network technologies provide excellent tools with which persistently active minority of politically

engaged citizens in western liberal democracies can continue and even expand their actions; the same technologies also provide the tools by which equally stubborn majority may continue its lack of involvement in political life [15, p. 153]. Power, as the ability to dictate their behavior, is in the networks of information exchange and symbolic manipulation, which relate to the social actors, institutions, cultural movements, which is possible through idols, spokespersons and various intellectual reinforcement [16, p. 340].

Nowadays it is much said about a crisis of democracy, where the old forms of policy are being replaced by newly created forms of the public policy networks. New forms of policies are the same – politicians are fighting for the management of information and controls in the “space” dominated by the media communication, as a necessary pre-conditions for access to more tangible forms of power [15, p. 144]. No doubt today we have to deal with the society in which information plays a primary role. The development of new information technology dominated the world. The creation and the revolution of the Internet make that the network is global. The new society is based on the network. The importance of the Internet in social, economic, political and cultural life is growing and becoming stronger. Currently the network is being in one of the stages of its development which is certainly not the last. The network is a huge space, which is used by the policy to its expansion. Political space is adjusting, even following the development of technology that has affects on the communication processes. Network revolution makes that the policy is evolving, changing, trying to learn a new platform of the Internet; the tools and forms it uses are changing too. In many cases Internet is the space of representation of political parties, government institutions: parliament, the senate, the president and politicians. Network society is almost dependent on the Internet in every area of life.

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