

Theoretical-methodological Bases of the "Sociocultural Transformation" Concept Explication

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the theoretical and methodological foundations for the introduction to culture philosophy and cultural theory the "sociocultural transformation" concept. This concept is compared to the notion of "culture crisis", which is closer in meaning. It is shown that in contrast to the crisis of culture, sociocultural transformation is a transitional stage in the dynamics of culture, representing approval of the new dominant characteristics, which, in complex, are attributive features of the next phase in its development. The totality of these characteristics is defined as the cultural-dominant ones and allows to differentiate between macro-periods in the dynamics of culture. Such periods are defined as cultural system. This concept includes a specific period of specific characteristics that remain relevant to all its extent and therefore distinguishes one stage of cultural development from another (or one cultural system from another). Possible for further refined new theoretical and methodological approaches to the periodization of European culture are proposed. In particular, four stages of social and cultural transformations, that separate cultural systems, are suggested, as the example of European culture. They are late Hellenism as the stage of social and cultural transformation, reflecting the transition from the ancient cultures system to the medieval one, Renaissance - as a socio-cultural transformation from medieval to modern European culture system, the avant-garde - as a socio-cultural transformation of new European cultures to the modern, and postmodern system - as a socio-cultural transformation, reflecting the transition from the modern cultural system to the post-modern system.

KEYWORDS

socio-cultural transformation,
the crisis of culture, cultural dynamics,
cultural system, European culture.

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Introduction

Dynamics is an attribute characteristic of culture, which includes the entire set of changes that occur in it under the influence of internal and external factors; its analysis provides research funds, mechanisms and processes that describe the changes (Shishova, 2009). Thus, the cultural dynamics means any change, sustainable order of interaction of its constituent components, as well as a certain periodicity, stadial characteristic and the direction to any state. In this context, culture should be seen as a dynamic system, defining as a set of elements that are in relationship and connection with each other, which is form certain integrity, and which changes its status over time under the influence of external and internal forces.

Analysis of the culture as a dynamic system shows that none of its element is a static entity. The philosophical concept or a religious doctrine, a masterpiece of world culture or scientific discovery - everything is the result of complex, long and contradictory process of development of the spiritual aspects of society, thus transforming and newly interpreting in the course of human development. Therefore, culture acts as an ambivalent connection of conservation, reproduction and constant renewal, and, consequently, the complexity, expressing it in a bizarre combination of traditional and innovative, conservative and modernizing, personal and social.

Being in constant evolution, however, an important cultural property as a dynamic system is its stability, which, as the researchers note, should be understood as the preservation of its basic structure of the system and the basic functions performed within a certain time and at a relatively low and various external influences and internal disturbances (Gvishiani, 1972; Uyomov, 1978).

The basis of this basic structure is, in our opinion, the anthropogenic orientation of culture, which sometimes is defined as a human-like creative function. In other words, regardless of the degree of cultural and creative activities, as well as the external conditions of the world around, determining the ups and downs, blossoms, as well as periods of stagnation and decay of culture, it is always looking for its paradigmatic borders in man-made boundaries precisely.

Thus, consideration of culture as a dynamic system allows to characterize it as a complex, constantly evolving phenomenon, which has the characteristics of continuity. This understanding contributes to a better understanding of the essence of culture, as well as identifying and explaining the factors specificity, regularities and change the outcome of it.

Methodology

The methodological basis of research of a culture as a dynamic system is the application of the dialectical method and synergetic approach.

The first involves the consideration of culture as an evolving system of the most general laws of life and understanding it as a constantly and radically changing system. Despite the historical significance of the dialectical method, it,

however, focuses only on external factors of development of culture, without taking into account its internal potential.

Synergetic approach allows a new conceptual position to assess both well-known phenomena, and to identify new patterns, which has not succumbed the analysis of the same methodological basis (in particular, dialectical) (Arshinov, 1999). Synergetic is internally pluralistic, actually, as modern scholars emphasize how pluralistic the integral image of the world is, which is assumed by it (Stepin, Guseinov, Semigin & Ogurtcov, 2001). It includes a variety of views and formulations, so the use of this approach to the analysis of cultural phenomena provides image rejection of the world as consisting of elementary particles in favor of the world picture as a set of non-linear processes. In its core, a synergistic approach offers a methodological program systems theory and principles of the system of research based on the study of patterns of development processes of complex and highly complex self-controlled systems - their self-organization processes, as well as de- and reorganization (Haken, 1993). Undoubtedly, culture is one of those mentioned above; therefore, the application of this approach will allow a new methodological approach to understand the reason of its being, not only as a developing, but also as a self-organizing system. In other words, it provides an opportunity to identify the internal factors of the dynamics of culture, thereby overcoming the one-sidedness of the dialectical method, analyzing only the external determinants.

The use of a synergistic approach to analyze culture as a dynamic system is based on the following grounds. For a long time the variability of simple forms of cultural life had been understood as specificity of culture in existence historical space. However, the historical process, where the culture develops, has a number of basic features that do not allow a simplified treatment that involves the use of, for example, only the dialectical method. First of all, in spite of a significant impact on the historical process of the natural environment, history is a natural process of socio-cultural changes and internally motivated self-movement. This means that there are typical patterns in culture dynamics, and therefore it can be identified as logically directed process, determined not only by external factors. Another feature is that the historical form of existence is characterized by the increasing complexity of the system, including the cultural system, i.e., movements from lower to higher forms, more complex and more sophisticated in terms of relations with the media system and its own life support. In this relation, the development of culture all way through its continuum is, on the one hand, the complexity of the cultural system (qualitative change) and on the other, - the increase of cultural heritage (quantitative change). The third feature of the historical existence of culture lies in the fact that the story expresses the objective focus of the process, no matter what extent it is realized within the system itself and no matter how spectrum of its multiline is developed. This means that an understanding of the magnitude of change is not always adequately realized, according to the changes taking place. However, the last features process independently of reflective society reaction to them.

So, from the perspective of a synergistic approach, culture is a constantly evolving system that has both a high level of complexity and a large number of elements. The process of self-organization in the culture is expressed in the reconstruction of existing and formation of new connections between the

elements of the system. A distinctive feature of the processes of self-organization is their focused, but at the same time natural, spontaneous, flowing within interaction with the environment character: these processes, in one way or another, are autonomous, relatively independent of the environment in which they are carried out.

Thus, the use of the dialectical method and synergetic approach in combination allows to recognize not only the direct and continuous influence of society on the development of culture (external factors), but also the processes that reflect the nature of its dynamics, which are understood as self-development, self-organization of a complex system (internal factors).

Application of the mentioned methodological positions gives reason to consider culture as a dynamic system, characterized by a continual set of successive periods: the progressive development and the changes occurring in it. If the last can occur under the influence of both internal and external reasons, the first is the result of internal factors only.

Results

The period of progressive development characterizes a stage of the culture system existence, in which the system itself demonstrates its maximum adaptability to the changing conditions of its existence, when established characteristics retain a certain consistency and demonstrate the highest efficiency and, therefore, form the specific features of the development period. This step usually takes a relatively short period, because, as a consequence of only the inner determination, culture, however, experiences constant exposure to environmental factors with a variety of intensity degrees.

The continuity of any culture allows to select a different number of periods of sustained development. This multiplicity is due to the specificity of culture as a system (Romakh, 2013) and due to a combination of self-development processes, as well as the influence of external determinations.

In the process of cultural dynamics a set of certain kind of characteristics makes it possible to distinguish periods of forward development one from another. For example, for the continuum of European culture this difference is apparent in the combination of features of antiquity, for which one can determine the amount of specifics that distinguishes it, for example, from the Middle Ages. Such periods must be determined, in our view, as the culture system. This concept includes the specific characteristics of progressive development period, which are still valid overall its length, and therefore distinguish one stage of culture progress development from another (or one culture system from another). The totality of these characteristics is defined as a culture-dominant. Undoubtedly, a certain core set of specific features can be identified in each culture system, through the prism of that address all the ideological, cultural and philosophical problems of the period. These characteristics reflect the essence of the culture system, finding a kind of incarnation of the spiritual in all spheres of society. They act as systems attributive properties and they are also a criterion of progressive development distinguishing periods. The basis of allocation of the "cultural system" concept is based on the space-time parameter, i.e. criterion is the species specificity of a stage of progressive development of the community spiritual life (in this case

European, and later - the Euro-Atlantic) in the time continuum, from the birth of the culture to the present day.

For the history of philosophical thought culture the concept of "cultural system" is not entirely new. Already in the works of G.Vico (Vico, 1982) with his concept of historical cycles in the development of all nations, J. Herder (Gulyga, 1975), who approved the educational approach to the study of the variety of human societies, we find the idea of dividing the historical-cultural process on the basis of common characteristics that distinguishes one period from another. P.A. Sorokin (Sorokin, 1957) has created an expand analytical concept of culture type change, having reviewed the history of mankind as a holistic socio-cultural supersystems change united by certain shared values and meanings. In the first half of the twentieth century the concept of culture as a system of interrelated elements that have the specificity of the various stages of its existence, was developed by K. Kluckhohn (Kluckhohn, 1949), A. Kroeber (Kroeber, 1963), B. Malinowski (Malinowski, 1990), L. White (White, 1975). In the second half of twentieth century the meaning of the concept of "cultural system" got limited by an instrumental value, implying a selection in its series of system characteristics that distinguish the periods from each other. In particular, this understanding is the most close to inserted meaning of the concept of "cultural system".

Thus, the species specificity of cultural system is determined by two attributive properties: the limitation of the continuum of a particular culture and the set of features, which distinguish it (culture-dominant features). Based on these criteria, the history of any culture can be divided into periods, among which the steps of maximizing the culture-dominant characteristics determine them, is an example of sustained development as well as the transitions within and between them, reflecting the essence of the changes.

By identifying the specifics of periods of sustained development in the dynamics of culture and defining them as cultural systems, we turn into the analysis of the stages at which the changes are carried out both within the cultural system and the transitions between them. These changes are of diverse nature, and scale of the population and their manifestations can be of a structural or systemic plan. Regarding the first, one could argue that they are designed to correct the current development of culture, to direct its new vectors in connection with the changed conditions within the culture-dominant characteristics of this progressive development, i.e., they are carried out within the cultural system. When we talk about the systemic nature of the changes, it is clear that they affect the totality of the specific characteristics of this period, the progressive development and, ultimately, they lead to the approval of new culture-dominant characteristics, i.e., to establishing a new culture system.

Thus, depending on the scale of the changes accomplished, the consequences for the further development of the culture can vary considerably. In case, if they are of a structural nature, there should be only the talk about replacement of some parts of an element, that the culture system is. However, if changes are systemic in nature, they lead to wider consequences, reflecting the process of replacing the one culture system to another, i.e., replacement of the whole. Accordingly to a scale of accomplished changes one can determine different processes of the structural and systemic nature. A reflection of the first

acts is the crisis of culture, whereas the systemic nature of the changes - is the essence of the social and cultural transformation.

In the most general sense, from the perspective of contemporary cultural knowledge, a crisis is a situation arising as a result of the gap between the culture with all its institutions and agencies, and the drastically changed conditions of social life. The crisis of culture - is a necessary stage in its dynamics. It highlights the need for partial replacement of existing ideological orientations, the exhaustion of some structural elements that reflects the essence of this period, the need of partial revaluation of existing values, sometimes correcting some of them. There is also a different situation - when completely new values are only at the stage of formation. Therefore, the crisis serves as a condition for the emergence of a new structural element in the culture system, as well as for the development of values in its assessment. However, these innovations are all within the boundaries of culture-dominant characteristics of the period and the progressive development in terms of the system does not differ from it. In addition, the crisis could entail full or partial deposition of some structures and cultural institutions such as unresponsive to the changed conditions. Events, coming in to replace spiritual life for its further existence, should be appropriate and not go beyond the boundaries of culture-dominant characteristics. Thus, to overcome the crisis it is sufficient to change a structural element, which does not go beyond the boundaries of cultures, the dominant characteristics of progressive development.

However, it is possible in the dynamics of culture that the replacement of a structural nature only is not enough. This occurs when the condition of the system scale-quality changes, deterministic features of the socio-economic development of a given society, as well as through internal determinations, evolving in it. The causes of systemic changes in history are often wars or revolutions. In this case, all aspects of society are drawn in qualitative changes, and culture is not exception, i.e. changes of systemic nature occur, leading to the replacement of one culture system to another.

This process of changing from one stage of society progressive development to another is natural and indispensable, because without this process culture, as a dynamic system, will cease to exist, so it is a way to adapt the spiritual spheres of society life, with all its structures and institutions to the changed conditions. Such system processes, leading to the abolishment of the former culture system and approval of new one are considered as a new socio-cultural transformation.

The socio-cultural transformation is a process of total system-hierarchical structuring reducing, complexity and multifunctional set of cultures, the dominant characteristics of the existing culture systems occurring under the influence of internal and external causes. This process leads to the degradation of the cultural system and, as a consequence - to replacement it with a new one, with the approval of culture-dominant characteristics that are adequate to the changing conditions and meet more effective implementation of the new culture system of their functions.

In times of social and cultural transformations the "old", which was formed and functioned in the previous culture system, gets improvement or deposition, but at the same time develops the "new" that will gain power, develop and define

the development of culture in the future, i.e. the approval of new culture-dominant characteristics comes.

Without defining these processes as a socio-cultural transformation, but by investing in them similar to our understanding of the essence of its meaning, the complexity and inconsistency of the changes taking place in the cultural dynamics of the transitional periods, many thinkers paid attention to. For example, P.A. Sorokin, who, in our opinion, should be considered as proto-theoretic of social and cultural transformation ideas, points out that "many of the values ,that are being destroyed, hardly deserve to rescue them. It is rather a process of freeing culture from the poison than its impoverishment" (Sorokin, 1992). Such transitional periods are, according to Sorokin, a chaos. In this case the closeness of his position to the approach prevailing today in synergy appears. From this chaos, a new culture, or, as we define it, a new culture system forms. Undoubtedly, in the dynamics of culture, chaos is also necessary, as well as the state of the order. In this sense, the order of culture should be defined as a period of progressive development, and chaos - as a crisis or social and cultural transformation, depending on the dimension of the changes, so the chaos in this case acts as something productive.

As a result of the process of socio-cultural transformation the "old" (from the previous culture-system) and the "new" (from the emerging culture-system) form a complex cohesion, a "node" in which the "new" is long-forgotten "old" - updated or borrowed from a previous or some previous culture-systems and put into a new socio-cultural context. Thus, in the transition periods important mechanisms of formation of the nascent culture-system become traditions and innovations, because they appeals to the previous experience of mankind, the working out of old traditions and rules, updating the archaic and the resumption of long-lost things, because the society is concerned about the search for new frontiers of culture of anthropogenic direction with taking into account changed conditions.

During the time of sociocultural transformations the characteristic space of sense uncertainty is formed, in which it is important to discover what the culture-dominant characteristics and development trends will be decisive and will set the tone of the next culture-system. Such sense uncertainty is reflected in all spheres of culture: in bizarre forms of art (for example, an attempt to express the content through a new form), the actualization of the irrational beginning in worldview and philosophy, overthrow the authority of the Church, with all its institutions in society. However, in the field of science, stated sense uncertainty, is generally expressed in breakthrough discoveries that often can not be explained by existing at the time of activity sociocultural transformation of the sum of the methodological grounds, but which can serve as a basis for the development of scientific knowledge during the upcoming culture-system and become immanent factors of its development.

Thus, in the dynamics of culture should distinguish structural and systemic changes. The first reflects the crisis of culture, the second - social and cultural transformation. Certainly, the essential content of these concepts has certain similarities. The periodic repetition should be included because both the crisis of culture and sociocultural transformation is a unique form of adaptation of culture to changing environmental conditions of reality, and their dependence on



internal and external factors. Undoubtedly, these two phenomena are absolutely necessary in the dynamics of culture.

The difference between concepts "crisis of culture" and "sociocultural transformation" serves, first of all, the scale of the changes. In sociocultural transformation there is a transition from the current culture-system to the next, with the crisis of culture development will occur relatively to the aggregate of the existing culture-dominant characteristics. In addition, in the dynamics of culture the crisis is the stage prior to the social and cultural transformation. This is due to the fact that the differences between all the structures and institutions of culture and changing conditions are not immediate, and therefore the process of deposition given culture-dominant characteristic is gradual. In that case, when it is impossible to overcome these differences by means of structural changes, changes of a systemic character are necessary, that is the stage of sociocultural transformation comes.

By analyzing the frequency of occurrence of crises of culture and sociocultural transformations in the continuum, for example, European culture, we note the following difference between them. In the European (Euro-Atlantic) civilization there are far more examples of when changes in the structural plan were sufficient for the further development of various spheres of spiritual life, and therefore not every crisis leads to sociocultural transformation. In this regard, in relation to the dynamics of culture we can speak about a certain division into "crisis of growth" and "crisis of falling" ("crisis of crises"). Under the first should understand the change of structural order, some part of an existing cultural-system, as for the "crisis of falling", it is the one that in all spheres of society's spiritual life shows that current culture-dominant characteristics are not able to meet the requests of changed conditions of life more adequately. In the latter case, to preserve culture qualitative changes are needed in its system, or sociocultural transformation. In other words, sociocultural transformation is not preparing by any crisis of culture, but only a "crisis of falling".

Therefore, we should distinguish the concepts of "crisis of culture" and "sociocultural transformation". Both of these concepts certainly characterize the dynamics of culture, change processes occur in it. However, the magnitude of the changes distinguishes these positions. If the crisis of culture reflects changes of a structural nature, the change of a part, the sociocultural transformation – changes of the systemic nature, the change of the whole.

Discussions

The history of European culture offers extensive material for analysis of its dynamics. However, the volume of accumulated knowledge and, above all, species differences of culture-systems represent a certain complexity: it is obvious that every time of the progressive development have its philosophical and theoretical basis, distinct from the other, and the difference in the objects and phenomena of the material and spiritual culture – it is also axiomatic position. In this connection, it is necessary to identify something in common that unites the changes of the systemic nature between the different cultural epochs in the continuum of European culture, or specificity of manifestations of sociocultural transformations.

Application of the proposed methodological base, which provides the use of a

synergistic approach and the principles of dialectics, as well as analyzed the theoretical foundations conceptually considering culture as a dynamic system with consecutive periods of sustained development and changes of the structural and systemic nature, allow to trace the development and identify the specifics of sociocultural transformations in the continuum of European culture through philosophical analysis of the following laws of its existence: the sociocultural determination, the laws of manifestation of transformation, and also features the results of a variety of sociocultural transformations.

The study of these theoretical positions is important for the research of the processes of cultural dynamics. In that case, if it is found a commonality in the laws of manifestations of all changes of systemic character in continuum of European culture on defined criteria, then on this basis, we can identify and analyze the species specificity of sociocultural transformation as a transition phase in the dynamics of culture.

Analysis of *the sociocultural determination* aims to identify specific reasons that led to deposition of culture-dominant characteristics of the previous stage and the approval of new. The theoretical basis of this is seen as the position, which provides that any phenomenon of cultural reality, in the first place, is determined by the concrete historical conditions of its existence.

Theoretical and methodological basis of this is seen as the position of providing that with identifying the causes of systemic changes in the dynamics of the culture of this region first of all it is necessary to examine the socio-economic conditions of development of the European (Euro-Atlantic) society at each transition of its existence. In other words, the development of the economic base from a position of the external action is the determining factor that has an influence on the nature and content of all processes in the development of the spiritual aspects of society.

It should not see in absolute terms the role of external factors, as a whole, and economic, in particular. Undoubtedly, they are determinant, but at the same time, an equal role have immanent terms of changes in culture, identifying which is much more difficult due to their non-obviousness, more sophisticated identification of cause-and-effect relations in them. However, consideration of culture as a dynamic system can solve this problem. The theoretical basis for this is the following. In some areas of culture at a certain stage of its development, there are those, because of which the accumulated potential goes beyond cultures-dominant characteristics of this progressive stage of development. It reveals itself in the new, inexplicable from the standpoint of the existing ideological grounds phenomena.

Analysis of *manifestation regularity* of sociocultural transformations aims at identifying common characteristics that reflect the principles of the culture in times of systemic changes in the course of its dynamics. In other words, it is necessary to analyze the concrete manifestation of sociocultural transformation in all spheres of culture and identify the common, which is characteristic for all these transitional stages. The theoretical basis for the study of manifestations of sociocultural transformations may be the following criteria positions: strengthening subjective trends in culture, a natural break with the culture-dominant characteristics of the previous stage of progressive development, eclectic, cultural relativism and pluralism, ironism, strengthening the beginning

of the game in times of systemic changes.

Analysis of *the results of sociocultural transformations* aims to reveal the results of the systemic nature changes in the dynamics of culture and their impact on its further development. The theoretical foundations of this are the following. The process of systemic changes in the dynamics of culture leads to a significant increase in the number of alternative paths to its further development, while reducing the number of production among them, because in the transformation step is no clear criteria, which of the options would be typical for a new culture-system. From the perspective of the dynamics of culture, one of the main results of the sociocultural transformation will be the approval of new culture-dominant characteristics, reflecting the transition to the next culture-system. In this sense, it can be found a definite relation of each sociocultural transformation in the continuum of European (Euro-Atlantic) culture. In addition, the results of a research of socio-cultural transformation will provide to identify the specificity that distinguishes a similar process from cultural crisis more accurately.

Conclusion

Thus, consideration of culture as a dynamic system reveals in it consistently successive periods of progressive development, and those that reflect the changes in the structural and systemic nature. The latter, defined as sociocultural transformations are transitional periods in culture dynamics necessary for its release to the new frontiers of culture of human directivity. To understand the essence of the process of sociocultural transformation the main task is seen in the analysis of determination, the laws of its manifestations and results of the systemic nature of the changes in the dynamics of culture. Designated laws and characteristics can be analyzed basing on the extensive material of history of European culture. As the sociocultural transformation is a transitional stage between culture-systems, we can offer a periodization of European culture, based on the theoretical and methodological principles, presented above. The base in this case is a statement that the value of sociocultural transformation is determined by the fact that it is a transitional stage in the development where the culture-dominant characteristics of expiring culture system exposed to deposition, and new forms develop in their places. According this principle, in the continuum of European culture can be defined 4 culture-systems, divided sociocultural transformations: ancient, medieval, modern European, modern. In line with this division should be defined four stages of sociocultural transformation in the continuum of European culture. All of them reflected the statement of new culture-dominant characteristics, i.e. the transition from one culture-system to another:

- Late Hellenism as a stage of sociocultural transformation, reflecting the transition from ancient culture-system to the medieval,
- Renaissance - a sociocultural transformation from the medieval to the new European culture-system,
- Avant-garde - a sociocultural transformation from new European culture-system to the modern,
- Postmodern - sociocultural transformation, reflecting the transition from the modern culture-system to the post-modern.

Thus, stages of sociocultural transformations in the continuum of European (Euro-Atlantic) culture can be represented as follows (Table 1.):

Table 1. Stages of sociocultural transformations in the continuum of European (Euro-Atlantic) culture

Stage	Name	Period	Essence of the stage
I	Late Hellenism	III - V cent.	Reflects the transition from ancient culture-system to the medieval culture-system
II	Renaissance	XVI - XVII cc.	Reflects the transition from medieval culture-system to the new European culture-system
III	Avant-garde	XIX- XX cc.	Reflects the transition from the new European culture-system to modern culture-system
IV	Postmodern	XX - XXI cc.	It reflects the transition from the modern culture-system to the post-modern culture-system

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