TECHNOLOGY-CENTERED CIVILIZATION:
GENESIS, DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS

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Abstract. Technology accompanied manhood throughout its history. As the world around us is made up of a complex and harmonious interweaving of different technologies, all that surrounds you is created with the help of technology. We eat them, sleep on them, and use them to have a rest. In one word, technological “omnipresence” covers all areas of our lives, it is present everywhere and accompanies us from birth to death, opens up new opportunities and expands the boundaries of our world; technology turned ape into man, and thanks to technology our modern society emerged. In this article, the author made a philosophical-ethical analysis of the genesis, history and consequences of technology-based civilization.

Keywords: iron grip, environment, social environment, culture, technological civilization, technology-centered civilization.

The term "technology-centered civilization" refers to a special type of civilization development, which originated in Europe in the epoch of early capitalism and which is often called as western civilization for its regional origin. Technology-centered civilization emerged in Europe in the XV-XVII centuries and spread across the globe.

The German philosopher Martin Heidegger said: "We are in the evil captivity of technology, however, we find ourselves when see it as something neutral. Such an idea, especially common in our days, makes us completely blind to its existence" (Heidegger, 1996).

Person feels helpless in the "iron grip" of scientific and technical progress. From this perspective, technological progress takes such a scale that threatens to spiral out of control society and become a formidable destructive force of technology-centered civilization that can cause irreparable damage to nature and man himself. From this, another consideration follows – civilization is more dangerous, and possibly we may have to revise our opinion.

Correctness of Heidegger's instrumental definition of technology is also suitable for modern technology, although some claim it as something new in comparison with the ancient craft. Power plants, jet aircrafts, radar platforms – all this are the means for achieving goals, all modern technology – a means to achieve the objectives (Heidegger, 1996).

In the ancient world of technology, technical knowledge was interrelated by magical effect and mythological worldview. In ancient culture, technology was seen as fundamentally different activity. Only in the twentieth century, technology, its development, its place in society and for the future of human civilization becomes the subject of systematic study.

Today, there are three basic steps in the technical evolution:
1. Technology of accident.
2. Technology of handicraft.
3. Technology of human-technician.

Technology of accident – this is primitive technology of prehistoric man, as well as of the present savages; this is a technology where an accident contributes to the invention. After all, primitive man is not aware of the nature of technology – he does not know that he has the ability to transform the nature in the desired direction.

Technology of handicraft – is a technology of ancient Greece, based on the traditional knowledge that was kept secret and eventually changed only slightly. For example, shoe-making, pottery, etc. – a gift that man is endowed with once and for all, even though people have already realized that this is not a natural quality, but property inherent exclusively to man.

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Technical knowledge is implemented not only through technical activity in all sorts of technical devices, but also in articles, books, textbooks, and so on, because without an established mechanism for the transfer of knowledge no technical development in our modern society would be impossible.

"An introduction to the technical civilization is not given only by one purchase of advanced technical devices – it should be accepted through education, training, and transfer of technical knowledge" – said the German engineer Franz Reuleaux in the late XIX century. Proof of this is, according to Reuleaux, modern China. Once China stepped aside from the traditional scheme of "purchase" of equipment from the West and transformed to the restructuring of its entire economic, educational and technological sphere, immediately there has been a distinct technical and economic growth. Far Eastern civilization is pluralistic at its beginning. In addition, if we go deeper into the history of China, we see that, in fact, China – is a country made up of many ethnic groups.

In our time, the scope of technology does not include only its usage but also the production of scientific and technical knowledge. Thus, modern technology is inextricably linked with the development of science.

Today, the highest level of rational generalization of technology – systems engineering – is a comprehensive theoretical generalization of all branches of modern technology and engineering sciences with focus on systemic image of the world.

In technology-centered civilization, pace of social development dramatically accelerates; extensive development is replaced by intensive. The highest values are innovation, creativity that forms new original ideas, activity patterns, goal-oriented and value adjustments. Tradition should not just be repeated, but constantly modified under the influence of innovation.

Type of civilization – a methodological concept used for the largest division of the cultural and historical development of mankind, which allows to identify the specific characteristics typical to many societies.

Modern scholars have identified four main types of civilizations (Parhomenko and Radugin, 2001, p. 51):

1. Natural communities,
2. Eastern,
3. Western and
4. Modern type.

Western type of civilization is the systematic characterization of a special type of civilization development, which includes certain stages of the historical and cultural development of Europe and North America. The core values of Western civilization, according to Max Weber, are as follows:

1) a dynamism, novelty-orientation;
2) the dignity assertion and respect for the humankind;
3) individualism, orientation to the autonomy of the individual;
4) rationality;
5) the ideals of freedom, equality, tolerance;
6) respect for private property;
7) preference for democracy to all other forms of governing. Western civilization acquires the features of technology-orientation, and most of the researchers noted that in the world today Western influence dominates and, therefore, the values of Western technology-centered civilization form the foundation (Toffler, 1970).

Technology-centered civilization emerged in Europe in the XV-XVII centuries and spread across the globe, until the end of the XX century.

Scientific rationality plays major role in the culture of technology-centered civilization; emphasis is made on the special value of intellect and science and technology based on its progress.

The characteristic features of the technology-centered civilization are:

1) a rapid change in technology through continuous introduction of scientific knowledge in the production;
2) the scientific and technical revolution that has significantly changed the relationship between man and nature, man's place in the system of production;
3) accelerating update of manmade environment in which its livelihoods flows, which is accompanied by the increasing dynamics of social ties, their relatively rapid transformation.

The successes of technology-centered civilization in the field of scientific and technological progress, improvement of people's lives have created the illusion that it is the optimal way of humanity.
For technology-centered civilization a particular understanding of nature as an inexhaustible resource pantry is characterized, representing an unlimited field of human activity. A special role in the formation of technology-based civilization belongs to violence – a peculiar form of driving forces of historical progress.

But, nevertheless, in the technology-centered civilization, power, domination, strength are always identified with the necessary component-dominant, essential for the implementation of human cultural activity in general. These and other universals were the formation of branched value-and-notional systems that determine the originality and uniqueness of technology-centered civilization.

Technology-centered civilization could realize its potential only through the complete subjugation of the nature forces to the human intellect. This form of interaction is inextricably linked to the widespread use of scientific and technological achievements that have helped our century contemporary feel their dominance over nature, and thus deprived of ability to feel the joy of harmonious co-existence with it.

"Those smaller or larger gaps that person punches in nature – are not nothing but a cell, where he holds his own eccentric being ... The meaning and reason of technology lies beyond it, namely in the use of excessive, released power of a man, by the very technology. That is the mission of technology – the liberation of man, bestowing him the opportunity to be true to himself" – said the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset (1939). However, the desire of mankind to master the technology becomes more and more insistent, as the technology is increasingly threatening to break out of his power. In this process, an important role is played by the social environment (Tillaeva, 2009, p. 8).

Summarizing the above, it may be noted that development of technology-centered civilization reveals a contradiction – the more society seizes the forces of nature through technology the less he has power over "his own destiny." This is the most striking contradiction of the historical development of modern technological culture (Stepin, Gorokhov and Rozov, 1995, p. 5). Process of civilization is favorable for the development of technology, but disastrous for the great works: art, science, religion, i.e. culture itself (Spengler, 1926).

References