Post-industrial society

A post-industrial society is a society in which an economic transition as occurred from a manufacturing based economy to a service based economy, a diffusion of national and global capital, and mass privatization. The perquisite to this economic shift is the processes of industrialization of liberalization. This economic transition spurs a restructuring in society as a whole.

The University of Maryland's George Ritzer provides six changes in social structure associated with the transition to a postindustrial society:

- 1. Within the economy, there is a transition from goods production to the prevision of services. Production of such goods as clothing and steel declines and services such as selling hamburgers and offering advice on investments increase. Although services predominate in a wide range of sectors, health, education, research, and government services are the most decisive for a postindustrial society.
- 2. The Importance of blue-collar, manual work (e.g., assembly line workers) declines and professional (lawyers) and technical work (computer programmers) come to predominate. Of special importance is the rise of scientists (e.g., medical and genetic and engineers.
- 3. Instead of practical know-how, theoretical knowledge is increasingly essential in a postindustrial society. Such knowledge is seen as the basic source of innovation (e.g., the knowledge created by those scientists involved in the human genome project is leading to new ways of treating many diseases) Advances in knowledge also lead to the need for other innovations such as ways of dealing with ethical questions raised by advances in cloning technology. All of this involved an emphasis on theoretical rather than empirical knowledge and on the codification of knowledge. The exponential growth of theoretical and codified knowledge, in all its varieties, is central to emergence of the postindustrial society.
- 4. Postindustrial society seeks to asses the impacts of the new technologies and, where necessary, to exercise control over them. The hope is, for example, to better monitor things like nuclear power plants and to improve them so that accidents like that at Three-Mile Island or Chernobyl can be prevented in the future. The goal is a surer and more secure technological world.
- 5. To handle such assessment and control, and more generally the sheer complexity of postindustrial society, new intellectual technologies are complexity of postindustrial society; new intellectual technologies are developed and implemented. They include cybernetics, and game theory and information theory.
- 6. A new relationship is forged in the post industrial society between scientists and the new technologies they create, as well as systematic technological growth, lies at the base of postindustrial society. This leads to the need for more universities and university-based student. In fact, the university is crucial to postindustrial society. The university produced the experts who can create, guide, and control the new and dramatically changing technologies.

ormation society

An information society is a society in which the creation, distribution, diffusion, use, and manipulation of information is a significant economic, political, and cultural activity. The knowledge economy is its economic counterpart whereby wealth is created through the economic exploitation of understanding. Specific to this kind of society is the central position information technology has for production, economy, and society at large. Information society is seen as the successor to industrial society.

One of the first people to develop the concept of the information society was the economist Fritz Machlup. In 1933 Machlup began studying the effect of patents on

research. His work culminated in the breakthrough study “The production and distribution of knowledge in the United States” in 1962. Fritz Machlup (1962) has introduced the concept of the knowledge industry. He has distinguished five sectors of the knowledge sector: education, research and development, mass media, information technologies, information services. Based on this categorization he calculated that in 1959 29% per cent of the GNP in the USA had been produced in knowledge industries.

Network society

The term Network Society was coined by Jan van Dijk in his Dutch book ‘De Netwerkmaatschappij’ (1991) -translation: ‘The Network Society’ (1999, 2006)- and by Manuel Castells in the first part of his trilogy ‘The Information Age’ (1996). In 1978 James Martin used the related term ‘The Wired Society’ indicating a society that is connected by mass- and telecommunication networks.

Van Dijk defines the network society as a society in which a combination of social and media networks shapes its prime mode of organization and most important structures at all levels (individual, organizational and societal). He compares this type of society to a mass society that is shaped by groups, organizations and communities (’masses’)organized in physical co-presence. According to Castells networks constitute the new social morphology of our societies. The diffusion of a networking logic substantially modifies the operation and outcomes in processes of production, experience, power, and culture. For Castells networks have become the basic units of modern society. Van Dijk does not go that far: for him these units still are individuals, groups, organizations and communities, be it increasingly linked by networks.

The network society goes further than the information society that is often proclaimed. Castells argues that it is not purely the technology that defines modern societies, but also cultural, economical and political factors that make the network society. For van Dijk information forms the substance of contemporary society, while networks shape the organizational forms and (infra)structures of this society.