Cultural and Value Differences in the Conditions of Technological Globalisation

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The text is the editor's introduction to the articles of this scientific journal *Philosophy. Sociology*, thematically divided into four sections: Philosophy of Technology and Ethics of Technology, Social Philosophy and Philosophy of Communication, Philosophy of Art and Art Communication, Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy. This article also aims to problematise the concepts of *culture* and *technology* and present one of the conceptual approaches when considering cultural and value differences in the conditions of *technological globalisation*. From the author's perspective, although technology provides tools for effective human activity and technological progress influences different societies and their interactions, technological solutions alone cannot eliminate or neutralise the cultural, mentality, moral, or simply value differences of different societies.

Keywords: values, culture, technology, globalisation, society

INTRODUCTION

Culture is most commonly understood broadly – as a complex phenomenon: the products of individual people and their group activities; various forms, methods, abilities, and skills of human activity acquired in society; knowledge inherited from tradition, art, technology, law, customs, moral values, religious beliefs, social systems, etc. On the other hand, there are numerous concepts that include the word 'culture': body culture, thinking culture, academic culture, discussion culture, ethnoculture, subculture, youth culture, national culture (e.g. French culture), Eastern and Western culture, entertainment culture, political culture, high/elite culture, pop culture, mass culture, sauna culture, cultural events, alcohol/drug culture, cultural heritage, Ancient culture, cultural geography, etc. Since the concept of 'Culture' can mean different things in various contexts, it becomes ambiguous.

One way to reduce the ambiguity of the concept of 'Culture' is to define it in opposition to the concept of 'Nature'. In this perspective, 'Culture' becomes everything that is not 'nature', and conversely, the living and non-living 'nature' appears as everything that is not 'culture'. In this sense, the concept of Culture encompasses the totality of material and spiritual/intellectual values created by humanity. These values can be examined from an objective and subjective perspective. Culture as objective creations of humanity is Art, Society, Technology/Technologies, Religion and Science. These are objective products of humanity that have the property

of shaping/creating the individual human being itself. Each of these areas could be further subdivided using one or another concept map or classification scheme. In this way, we could explain in more detail the types of art or the types of societies, as well as the perspectives through which science, technology, or religion can be analysed. Some phenomena belong to several areas, for example: to whom should we classify cooking, sports and language? Classification schemes are conditional, with their own limitations.

Culture can be examined not only as objective creations/products of humanity (art, religion, technology/technologies, science and society) but also from a subjective perspective. Culture, from a subjective point of view, is the values of the individual and society. The individual's subjectivity is revealed through his/her specific lifestyle or way of life. The values promoted by a person express his uniqueness as an individual. An individual realises important values in his daily life, which express his unique approach to the world. The values of different individuals are often incompatible, for example, conflicts often arise due to different moral beliefs. Social subjectivity can be examined using concepts such as mentality, customs, cultural traditions, specific social institutions, societal structure, established behaviour/lifestyle models within society, or, for example, social roles (Berger, Luckmann 1966) and others. Different societies are built on the basis of different values, which, like individual people, are prone to conflict. This is currently vividly illustrated by various ongoing military conflicts between societies with different values (Mickūnas 2022). The diversity of values of cultures and societies, as well as of individual people, is something that can be not only spread (through modern media) but also destroyed or levelled with the help of technological innovations. What is the relationship between culture and technology in a broad sense? How important is cultural diversity in the context of technological globalisation? Does technological progress provide keys, and if so, what keys, to solving complex issues of value conflicts?

TECHNOLOGY AND CULTURE

A person uses technology in all areas of his activity and life. We have household, military, industrial, transport and other types of technology. In addition, technique/technology cannot be reduced solely to material means of human activity (Ellul 1964). Technology also includes the most diverse methods of human activity: scientific research, creativity, teaching, communication, etc. Technique and technology are not something alien to man, looking retrospectively we can see that technique/technology in the broadest sense is one of those cultural phenomena that contributed the most to creating, changing and reshaping both the human body and his consciousness. Man is the result of cultural, and therefore also technical activity. Man is a part of nature only in the sense of a purely physical body and is dependent on certain laws – everything else is nature that is transformed by human creative activity and subordinated to human goals, nature that is technically controlled (Biržys 2008). Technology can, therefore, be generally understood as the transformation of the natural or physical state according to human needs, values and goals.

Every cultural phenomenon has its own technological side/plane. Science, for example, uses not only various instruments (observation, measurement equipment), but also research methods; a method is a technological means of obtaining knowledge or checking its correctness, thus a method is one of the technical phenomena (e.g. an experiment). Society is full of social institutions (university, police, army, hospital, etc.), and each institution can also be perceived as a tool/instrument that is used to achieve certain goals. In this sense, social institutions are also technological tools (Popper 1945). In art, we find techniques as various

methods or ways of creation. Every technological phenomenon operates within some cultural context: either within a national culture or in the global cultural space. For example, social networks, where there is not only useful but also harmful information, as communication technologies allow crossing national borders – this is a global technology. In the virtual space of the internet, like in a certain artificial reality, various cultural phenomena areas are currently being developed: art, science, politics, commerce, entertainment culture, etc.

Cultural geography, in the broadest sense, reveals the most significant cultural differences among people. Cultural maps allow us to visualise the mentality, or, in a broad sense, the value-social differences of different societies that have not yet been overcome by technological globalisation. Without delving into various intermediary or hybrid variants, we understand that a significant part of Europe, along with two countries on the North American continent – the USA and Canada – as well as Australia, Argentina, etc., differ from the Eastern societies such as India and China, and various societies adhering to the Islamic religion. Each of these cultures has its distinctive features. On the other hand, even in completely different cultures, we find various similarities, allowing us to talk about universal human values.

The spread of material, informational-linguistic and social technologies worldwide is attributed to their efficiency. It is technology, not individual people or their groups, that is the main driver and engine of globalisation (e.g. transportation, information, industrial technologies, etc.). Technology creates the phenomenon of globalisation itself. 'Technological globalisation' homogenises the world, not only establishing similar technology but also promoting similar spiritual/moral/intellectual values, encouraging the decline of traditional cultures, traditional methods and tools, and traditional worldviews (as technically inefficient). Cultural diversity is one of the main tools in the fight against globalisation processes. Globalisation, carried out through technological means, poses a risk of cultural homogenisation; one or a few dominant societies, spreading their influence in various parts of the world, alter or erode local cultures or societies. By protecting and nurturing cultural diversity, we can maintain unique traditions, values and languages. Cultural diversity promotes dialogue and intercultural understanding and cooperation. The interaction of various cultures can be a source of the most diverse technological innovations, and they jointly serve the development of creativity in the most diverse areas – art, science, creation of public organisations or various social systems. The processes of globalisation homogenise the world and reduce the creative potential of humanity, while cultural diversity, on the contrary, creates conditions for new discoveries, inventions, and, in general, the emergence of various new cultural practices worldwide, thereby contributing to the faster progress of humanity. Cultural diversity, their interaction, and enrichment of each other are essential indicators of human development. Various nations, addressing their life challenges and emphasising different aspects of their lives, create/invent new technologies that, if truly effective, are later adopted by other nations. World cultural diversity is beneficial for the progress of technology itself. Paradox is that although globalisation is driven by technology, global homogenisation of the world is not beneficial for the development of technology itself. Another paradoxical situation is the following: by promoting cultural and value diversity at both individual and societal levels, conditions may be created for ongoing conflicts and social tensions.

FINAL REMARKS AND CONCLUSIONS

Technological progress, on its own, does not resolve cultural-value conflicts. According to the position of cultural relativism, different societies are simply different cultural-value worlds, and it is impossible to establish universal norms or evaluation systems that would be

suitable for all societies. It means that different societies have their unique values, norms and understandings that need to be assessed and understood considering their specific cultural context. Such a relativistic position can easily justify conflicts, even military conflicts, between different societies, despite being technologically similar in many respects. Technological progress has a profound effect on societies, but it alone cannot fundamentally change the cultural subjectivity of any society. Technological progress is a powerful force shaping various aspects of societies, from their economies to communication, but it does not automatically alter the deep-seated cultural values and beliefs of a society. Cultural subjectivity remains a complex interplay of historical, social and individual factors, where technology is just one influencing factor among many. Technology provides tools for effective human activity, technological progress influences different societies and their interaction, but technology alone cannot eliminate or neutralise cultural, mindset, moral, or simply value differences between different societies. So the fundamental problem of cultural relativism remains unresolved; it continues to be an important topic for philosophical inquiries. In this issue of the scientific journal *Philosophy. Sociology*, the majority of attention is devoted to the issues of the philosophy of technology, especially focusing on the current developments in artificial intelligence technology, examined by representatives of various sciences. Also, in the articles, issues in social philosophy, philosophy of art, etc. are explored, requiring an analysis of values for their resolution. We wish the readers an insightful exploration of scientific texts and the formulation of their own ideas during engaging reading time.

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Kultūriniai ir vertybiniai skirtumai technologinės globalizacijos sąlygomis

Santrauka

Šiame mokslo žurnalo „Filosofija. Sociologija" numerio sudarytojo įvadiniame tekste straipsniai tematiškai suskirstyti į keturias rubrikas: technikos filosofija ir technologijų etika, socialinė filosofija ir komunikacijos filosofija, meno filosofija ir meno komunikacija, fenomenologija ir egzistencinė filosofija. Tekste siekiama suprobleminti kultūros ir technologijos sąvokas bei pateikti vieną iš konceptualių prieigos būdų, svarstant kultūrinius ir vertybinius visuomenių skirtumus technologinės globalizacijos sąlygomis. Autoriaus požiūriu, nors technologijos teikia įrankius efektyviai žmogaus veiklai, o technologinė pažanga daro įtaką skirtingoms visuomenėms ir jų sąveikai, vien tik technologiniai sprendimai negali panaikinti ar neutralizuoti kultūrinių, mentaliteto, moralinių arba tiesiog vertybinių įvairių visuomenių skirtumų.

Raktažodžiai: vertybės, kultūra, technologijos, globalizacija, visuomenė