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A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH TO IDENTIFYING NEW FORMS OF STRATIFICATION AND INEQUALITY IN THE CONDITIONS OF GLOBAL TRANSFORMATIONS AND DIGITAL TRANSITION

In the context of global transformations and digital transition, a structural approach to defining inequality was proposed in sociology – as a rule, the economic factor of inequality was supplanted by a new social-constructivist methodological trend [1]. Thus, the question of what constitutes the basis of social inequality was supplemented by the question of how people themselves produce and reproduce social inequality in ordinary practices of everyday social life. Predictably, digital development exacerbates the digital divide, which is a consequence of the reproduction of digital social inequality [2]. In modern sociology, the concept of social stratification is understood as social differentiation of people, expressing their social inequality in income, education, participation in power, public prestige, self-identification and other objective criteria and the inequality based on this, the hierarchical ranking of their status and role in society and its subsystems.

In modern sociological theory, the category of "social inequality" is used primarily to reflect the complex social structure of society and denotes a specific form of social stratification, in which individuals, social groups, strata or classes are at different levels of the vertical social hierarchy and have unequal opportunities to satisfy their material, social or spiritual needs. We believe that in the context of the digital transition, digital competition and digital rivalry are aggravated [3], which significantly transform the rights of people in the context of automation and robotization of production. The traditional nature of stratification is expressed in the fact that throughout the history of human civilization, the inequality of the position of various groups of people (rich and poor, ruling and dependent) remains relatively stable, since social inequality is a universal social phenomenon.

We proceed from the fact that stratification is a descriptive concept, implying a certain ordering of members of society based on some suitable criterion, such as income, education, lifestyle, ethnic origin. Classes are conflict groups that unite to challenge the existing distribution of power, advantages and other opportunities. Sociologists give a number of arguments in favor of the fact that classes and class division are a special case of stratification. Social inequality is a reflection of the complex social structure of society and a specific form of social stratification, in which certain individuals, social groups, strata or classes are at different levels of the vertical social hierarchy and have unequal opportunities to satisfy their material, spiritual, social and other needs. Digital social inequality is a consequence of the complex hierarchical construction of the digital infrastructure of digital platforms and a specific form of digital social stratification, in which individual individuals and social groups are at different levels of the digital rating, which affects the conditions of their access not only to digital assets, but also to assets in offline reality, which leads to unequal opportunities to satisfy their needs and rights, in particular, to work. The gig market exacerbates this digital stratification [4; 5].

Scientists use new concepts to explain this phenomenon, such as z-inequality [6], which describes dramatic changes in the capabilities of representatives of different generations. It would seem that digital transformations of the financial sector are capable of increasing financial inclusion [7], but at the same time, the platformization of labor markets devalues labor as a factor of production. The social status of each person in the system of digital social stratification is determined by a combination of many features, and is also the result of a number of factors and conditions of digitalization of skills. Traditionally, poverty was measured by comparing the average per capita income with the subsistence minimum adopted in a particular society, that is, with the cost of a minimum basket formed taking into account established consumption standards. Modern sociologists interpret poverty as a multidimensional and cumulative (aggregate) process of interaction and mutual influence of various factors. Factors such as unemployment and the situation on the labor market remain the focus of their attention.

At the same time, digital spatial inequality goes far beyond social inequality and is determined not only by social processes within the country, but also by global changes in innovative, digital and technological development. Digital space can be considered the basis for a variety of forms of new digital social inequality, since it is obvious that

the structure of digital spatial opportunities on digital platforms has a significant impact on the social status of both individuals and households, which, in the context of digital outsourcing, acquire new forms of self-determination. Access to digital resources (information as a factor of production) and digital assets allows members of new digitalized households to receive digital education, maintain their health with the help of digital medicine and build their digital career trajectories in global digital gig markets.

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