BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INFORMALIZATION OF THE BEHAVIOR PATTERNS OF INDIVIDUALS

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Abstract

Informalization is a process of regulating the behavior of individuals in which formal social norms become part of the general culture, of the habitus of individuals and become informal rules of behavior. Informalization takes place in specific socio-historical conditions. This article makes an attempt to follow the process of informationalization of the social in a historical perspective. In that sense, we will follow the informatization as part of the wider process of civilizing the behavior of individuals.

Keywords: informalization, formalization, manners of behavior, civilization, permisivness

Introduction

The concept of informationization was first presented in 1976 by the Dutch sociologist Cas Wouters. The concept was developed in order to nterpret the growing trend of relaxation and relativization of the code of conduct in Western Europe in the 1960s and 1970s. The question was raised whether the increased permissiveness is the result of what Norbert Elias calls the direction of civilization. In that sense, the spread of informationalization and consumerism as part of a popular culture are part of complex and intertwined social relations dominated by the relation of social competition (Wouters 2011). The concept of informationalization relies on Norbert Elias's interpretation of social control, which can be summed up in the sentence "the controlled decontrolling of emotional controls" (Elias 2000). It is a process in which the control of the behavior of individuals becomes more subtle, more refined, less rigid, less obvious, through the expression of pleasure in communication, more relaxed, more natural (Van Iterson 2002: 38).
In order for the process of informationalization of behavior to happen, the process of formalizing it happened first. Although there were long periods of formalization and informationalization of the behavior of individuals, Wouters believed that from the Middle Ages onwards in Europe, the process of formalization of the standards of behavior mainly dominated (Garcia, Malcolm 2010: 41). We will first explain the formalization process, and later move on to the informationalization of behavior patterns.

Formalization of manners of behavior

The book Civilizing Process (2000) by Norbert Elias is the first systematic study of the historical development of manners and emotion regulation. Elias shows that from the 15th to the 19th century, manners of behavior in Western Europe cultivated, systematized, became more detailed and became more consistent. They reached the stage of development of a specific type of habitus, of conscience and self-regulation of the behavior of individuals. It was a long-term process of

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formalizing manners of behavior, disciplining people and their emotions. In that process, the norms became more and more rigid, demanded more and more discipline in behavior, included more and more aspects of the lives of individuals, went into greater and greater detail and took the form of tradition, customs, manners of behavior, legal norms, etc. (Wouters, Dunning 2019: 5). Presenting excerpts from the books that recommend how individuals should behave in certain situations, arranged chronologically one after the other, Elias reveals long-term changes in the manners of behavior of individuals that are influenced by social structures, which affect the evolution of the structure of the person. In doing so, Elias analyzed the changing of behavior related to the basic needs of the human body, such as eating, drinking, sleeping, blowing one's nose, as well as how the regulation of sexual and aggressive impulses changes.

According to Elias, the process of civilizing the standards of behavior of individuals goes together with the growth of the state. As states began to gain more and more power (physical and symbolic), they increasingly imposed standards of behavior. From the 5th century, when the Roman Empire collapsed, until the 11th century, Western Europe was dominated by centrifugal, disintegrating forces. The growth of medieval absolutist states is associated with the monopolization of power by one of the many pretenders to the throne who had their own private armies. The claimants to the throne in the process were either eliminated in mutual battles or recognized the supreme authority of the monarch. In exchange for recognizing the supreme authority of the monarch, the pretenders to the throne and their retinues became part of the imperial courts. The prestige and social status of the imperial court was not obtained on the basis of showing physical strength (as before), because the emperor had a monopoly on physical strength, but on the basis of showing manners of behavior, dressing, gesturing, verbal expression, etc. The fear of losing prestige and status in society is one of the greatest motives that shape the behavior of individuals throughout history. Preserving high status and prestige in society requires anticipation of the behavior of other individuals, control over one's own behavior, over one's own body, etc. If in modern society the status is mostly linked to the competition in the labor market, in the Middle Ages the social status was linked to the internalization of manners of behavior. The competition, the struggle for status, prestige in society in the Middle Ages was no less than it is in modern society. Manners required control of emotions. Showing emotions in public meant losing prestige and status in society. Thus the display of emotions moved from public to private life. Standards of behavior were first introduced in the imperial courts where the competition for social status was greatest. People who had a lower social status, in order to reach the status of those in the court, over time adopted the standards of behavior that were valid in the court. The courtiers, in order to be more respected at the court, but also to distinguish themselves from those who are not at the court, constantly introduced new manners of behavior.

An example of how manners of behavior are established is the use of cutlery. According to Elias, the reason for the introduction of cutlery was not of a hygienic nature or because previously people could not afford to make and use cutlery. On the contrary, the introduction of cutlery was prompted by the desire of people who were part of the court to distinguish themselves in manners from those who were not courtiers. Along with the introduction of cutlery, a feeling of the importance of hygiene during eating begins to be cultivated, but also a feeling of disgust, revulsion and contempt for not using cutlery, as well as for more people to eat from the same plate. The control over the internalization and respect for the standards of behavior was first external (formalized), but with the increasing of the chains of interdependence, the density of the social networks of the individuals, the internal control of the behavior of the individuals is of increasing importance. It is a process that Elias calls the psychologization and rationalization of

behavior. Although that process is not linear and flat, over time the balance between external and internal control of behavior shifts more and more in favor of internal control. This is how the reflexivity of individuals' behavior increases. When a form of behavior becomes part of the culture, part of the collective unconscious, it is already unreflective, we do not think about those rules of behavior, but automatically implement them. In this way, space is opened to accept new patterns of behavior, new manners which, while they are still new, we reflexively adapt, we reflect on them, if we make a mistake, so that over time they become part of the culture and its implementation to became automatized. So Elias gives us the example of Erasmus de Rotterdam's book, "On the Civility Boys" published in 1530. In it, Erasmus de Rotterdam gives us the mental image of the upper secular class in the middle ages. He analyzes manuals on how people who belong to the upper class should behave. Among other things, there are recommendations related to eating, spitting, and body functions. Patterns of behavior that are normal today were not then, so you can see what recommendations were given to people. Among other things, there are recommendations on how to tie shoes, that several people should not eat from the same plate, what to do if someone offers you meat that someone has eaten before, that you should not lick your fingers while eating, etc. Elias analyzes the recommendations of behavior over a longer period and notices that they first come in written form (are formalized), when they become part of the culture, part of the collective unconscious they are lost from the following manuals for good behavior, on their place are introduced manners of behavior that regulate other issues. The rules of behavior that have not yet been fully accepted, have not yet become part of the collective unconscious are kept in the manuals for a longer time.

The rules of behavior were first formalized, formally written, until they were learned by all individuals in society, that is, they became part of the culture, and later they were informalized. The process of formalizing manners and disciplining people was very intense and dominant until the 19th century. The process of informalionalization of behavior patterns became particularly noticeable in the 1920s and 1960s and 1970s. Considering the changing of the lifestyle and the permissiveness of the standards of behavior, the question of changing the direction in the civilizing process was raised. The question was raised whether informalization is part of the process of civilization or vice versa is part of the process of de-civilization of society. The result of debates related to this dilemma was that informalionization is not a backward step in the process of civilization, but on the contrary, informalionization indicates the transfer of responsibility to individuals as part of the figurations in the management of emotions and self-regulation of behavior (Wouters 2011).

Historical overview of informalization

According to Wouters (2004;2007) "expressive revolution" is an expression of the acceleration of the long-term processes of informalization. The process of informalization begins at the end of the 19th century. It is a process of changing the manners of behavior and the lifestyle in Great Britain, the USA, Germany and the Netherlands, which allowed the emergence of alternatives of behavior and expression of emotions. The manners of behavior in that period become milder, more differentiated and more diverse. Many patterns of behavior that had previously been restricted or prohibited were permitted during this period, especially regarding sexuality. Manners and patterns of behavior, modes of expression, art forms, spoken language, dress,

dancing became less formally limited and regulated (Van Iterson 2002: 37).
Between 1950 and 1980, the processes of social, psychological emancipation and integration accelerated dramatically. The belief that it is dangerous to express emotions has greatly diminished. The traditional belief that it is shameful to express emotions, especially in public, was a reflection of authoritarian relationships and a high degree of social control. More egalitarian relations in society, reflecting the changing balance of power between social groups, helped to overcome the fear of free expression of emotions. Thus, a growing number of people who were more and more firmly involved in the chains of interdependence, began to implement in everyday life the new social codes that allowed for a freer expression of emotions. It has even become a fashionable and in some sense desirable way of behaving. It was not until the 1950s that the dominant mode of self-regulation of behavior and expression of emotions reached a strength and scope that enabled more and more people to admit to themselves and others that they had emotions that would not cause status anxiety and shame (Wouters 2011). In that period, people began to dress more casually, to address each other more informally, to address each other by their first name, to admit and express their feelings, to enter into intimate relationships with work colleagues, to relativize the boundary between private and public life (Van Iterson 2002: 37).
Some linguists such as Norman Fairclough (1996) use the term "border crossing" to explain what is happening in a post-industrial society of new complex social relations, characterized by a change in behavior, including a change in language use. Informalization is an example of those changes. According to Fairclough, the production of informality, friendship, intimacy is an indication of crossing the border between public and private, commercial and domestic. It is partly based on simulating discursive practices in everyday life. Linguistic informalization is reflected in the use of abbreviated forms of address, abbreviated negative and auxiliary verbs, construction of active instead of passive sentences, use of slang, colloquial speech in public communication, etc.

The reduction of social differences and informalization

The reduction of social differences in the 20th century is closely related to the progress of informalization of relations between individuals. The reduction of social differences meant more balanced relations in organizational structures, decentralization of decision-making in companies, increased complexity and flexibility of the tasks that individuals have at the workplace, but also in society in general, greater relaxation of relations between superiors and subordinates (Hughes 2010: 44). At the family level, children were less likely to seek permission from their parents about how to behave, and women were less submissive to their husbands (Mennell 2001: 44). Women began to get involved in working relationships, to acquire their own incomes, to become independent from their husbands, to become emancipated. This has an impact on the lower stability of marital relations, and the relations between spouses are less and less moralized and more and more psychologized. The reduction of social differences is reflected, among other things, in the introduction of universal suffrage, the introduction of the principle of one person - one vote. The reduction of social differences meant greater rights for individuals to express their individuality, greater equality between the sexes, greater freedom for women to wear short skirts, etc. The upper classes, wanting to maintain their status in society, tended to create an exclusive lifestyle.
Internalization is a process that occurred in conditions of social mobility of a large number of

social groups such as the working class, women, youth, African-Americans, migrants. Their integration into the national and international networks of interdependencies conditioned their mutual relationship to be based on equality, that is, on avoiding the use of stereotypes that showed the inferiority of one group or the superiority of another group. In the process of social mobility, the difference in power between social groups decreases and thus the social, physical and psychological distance between people decreases. Expressing any distance, whether it is based on class, age, gender, must be done cautiously and covertly. In that sense, the ceremonialism in holding meetings was reduced, in the mutual address of the interlocutors, the communication between the bosses and their officials relaxed, as well as the communication between women and men, older and younger, etc. (Van Iterson 2002: 37). The competition to achieve a desired social status has become more subtle and sharper. The competition of informal manners of behavior and relaxed lifestyle became a characteristic of the consumer society, especially after the 1960s. Such trends went in the same direction as the expansion of the welfare state, the acceptance of emancipatory values by a growing number of people, and the spread of consumer culture (Wouters 2011).

Informalization is a process related to the emancipation of behavior. That process also referred to the attitude towards violence. The process of formalized regulation of violence lasted until the last decades of the 19th century, including sexual violence. Individuals were physically punished for violent behavior. Thus the use of physical violence began to be avoided, suppressed, denied in an automated way. Through the fear of physical punishment, a rigid and authoritarian consciousness was built among individuals. This authoritarian consciousness of the individuals acted as their "second nature". In the process of informalization, emotions that were long-term suppressed, repressed and denied began to be rediscovered and become accessible through the use of informal social codes. Wouters' research indicates that there is an increased control of the fear of clumsiness in the expression of emotions, growth of a more solid and reflective self-regulation of the behavior of individuals. In that way, the emotions that are expressed are kept under greater control (Wouters 2011). But this time the control is not external, but internal. The instrument of control is no longer the fear of physical punishment, but the shame from those with whom individuals live in a chain of interdependence. Shame is imposed by a conscience that is built under the threat of physical punishment over a long period of time. People are embarrassed if they don't know the manners of good behavior. Ignorance of the manners of good behavior, among other things, is associated with loss of social status.

Wouters believed that the reduction of social differences is related to the process of informalization, but he did not consider that whenever informalization of relations between people occurs, it automatically means the democratization of the realities in society. The two trends, the reduction of power distance and the informalization of behavior patterns were dominant and obvious at the beginning of the 20th century, but from the mid-1960s the relationship between these two trends was not so direct and became less obvious. Since that period, the open and direct expression of class differences, of the superiority of one's status, has become counterproductive for the one who expresses it. Informalization does not mean that social differences have been overcome, but only that it is socially unacceptable for them to be shown in the public space, both by those who are superior and by those who are inferior in terms of social status. The increased interdependencies of social ties have had the effect of increasing the degree of social integration and obligations that individuals have towards each other. It required a change in the social habitus of individuals and exerted pressure for greater diversification and flexibility of patterns of self-regulation of individuals' behavior. It can be said that informalization is a

process of transition from external to internal control of the behavior of individuals.
The relationship between greater equalization of inequalities in relations between social groups and the softening – relativization of social norms was first noted by de Tocqueville, and Norbert Elias describes it as functional democratization (Powell 2010: 10). Functional democratization should not be confused with the political idea of democratization. Functional democratization is a long-term unplanned process of reducing the degree of power and social distance between interdependent groups in increasingly differentiated societies. The state became democratized, it discovered that there were no subjects but citizens, marginalized social groups such as workers, women got their representation in politics, nation states were transformed into welfare states. The increasing chains of interdependence and integration in society include both friends and enemies. In that sense, the manners of behavior of different social groups converge, but the nuances in this standard of behavior become greater.
Sexualisation, that is, the sexual revolution, is part of the process of informalzation. The shortening of women's skirts began in the 1920s and, among other things, reflected the narrowing of the power gap between women and men. The shortening of skirts is a reflection of the greater freedom in the choice of clothes that women have, but also that they have gained so much power and confidence that they could wear clothes that they would not have had the courage to wear before, because they would have been stigmatized by society (Wouters, Mennell 2013: 569).

Informalization and permissiveness

Informalization as a process is possible due to the efficiency and automation of previously imposed restrictions on the behavior of individuals. The civilizing process is a process of imposing and formalizing the restriction of the behavior of individuals, which is imposed through the growth of the state and under the threat of the use of force and the use of force by state institutions on those who do not respect the restrictions. Over time, the control of behavior changes from external to internal. The fear is no longer of physical punishment, but of the imposition of shame through the loss of social status. Control in that situation is not external, but internal in the form of self-discipline. Self-control goes to the point where individuals begin to feel ashamed of themselves. When this happens, society pushes aside the mechanisms of external control more and more – that is the process of informalization. Informalization does not mean that there is no control of the behavior of individuals, but that it is so internalized, efficient, has become part of the generally accepted culture, a standard of behavior, that it no longer makes sense to be imposed by society, because social groups have already forced it as part of their culture, their way of life, it became part of the habitus of individuals.
It would be easiest to conceptualize informalization as a process of liberation from the constraints of established manners of behavior, reduction of restriction and increase of varieties as a result of the increased number of contacts of people of different origins, with different social characteristics, increase of self-regulation of behavior, increasing the internal tensions of individuals in efforts to control impulses and emotions (Powell 2010: 11). But informalization is something more than just a release from the constraints of established manners of behavior, in that sense informalization differs from the concept of permissiveness, which means relaxing the standards of behavior. Such relaxation of standards of conduct in the 1970s and 1980s was welcomed by one section of the public as liberalization, but condemned by another section of the public as a decline in moral standards of conduct. Informalization as a concept makes a synthesis

that goes one level above moral opposites.
Informalization and increasing self-control of individuals go together. Informalization does not mean less discipline in the workplace, in the relationship between the sexes, between the elderly and the younger, etc. Informalization means only the refinement of the behavior patterns, their polishing and greater relaxation of the social actors in playing their social roles. In other words, it is "controlled decontrolling of emotional controls" (Elias, Dunning 1986: 44). Informalization means that individuals know when, where and to whom what can be said, when a joke or criticism is appropriate, when it is considered an insult, etc.
An example of how informalization works is the wearing of a corset, which was characteristic of aristocracy in Spain in the 16th century. Over time, the wearing of a corset is also taken up by the members of the lower social strata, but also in other countries in Europe. Wearing a corset was especially popular in the 19th century. The expansion of the practice of wearing a corset means increased control over the body. The looser norms in dress, which were reflected in the expansion of the practice of wearing a corset, eventually meant a looser interpretation and application of moral norms in society. Towards the end of the 19th century, an additional impulse of informalization takes place through the initiation of a movement to reform the way of dressing. The movement is based on a combination of the ideas of naturalness and beauty, the motto of the movement is that natural is beautiful. Since then, corsets have gone out of fashion, but the motto that natural is beautiful, did not mean that nature would not be under control. So women started wearing belts, corsets, bras, etc. In the 1960s, a new wave of liberalization of the female body took place. It was not full liberalization, that is, in Elias's vocabulary, it was "controlled decontrolling." From that period onwards, women increasingly turned to diet control, sports, aerobics, fitness, home training and other forms of body work, including plastic surgery (Wouters, Dunning 2019: 9).
Informalization of the manners of behavior has also occurred in patients who are suffering from incurable diseases. Traditionally, such patients were not informed about their true condition and were under the illusion that they had a good chance of being cured. Today, legal norms stipulate that doctors have a legal obligation to openly inform patients about the actual condition they are in (Wouters, Dunning 2019: 9). This example shows that informalization is going in a direction in which unpleasant information is not taboo but shared.

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