

ALVIN TOFFLER AND THE ECONOMICO-SOCIAL EVOLUTION

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Abstract

In the present paper we analyse, from an epistemological standpoint, the phases of economic and social development in Alvin Toffler's perspective. In his works, he analyses economy and society at three distinct levels, which he calls "waves". In Toffler's view, humankind passed through two such phases (waves) and presently it is prepared to enter the third one, the knowledge one. The way from the first to the current (third) wave was long and difficult, marked by deep changes in all domains as well as at a mental level. From an agrarian society, whose primary objective was subsistence, characterizing the first wave, we have now reached the stage of a society where knowledge comes to the forefront, the third wave, after having transited the industrial one, which has characterized the second wave. Currently, humanity faces a turning point, that Toffler regards as a "quantum leap" towards a totally different civilisation. The changes of the third wave will be deep and will eventually open the way to a consciousness society, as Mihai Drăgănescu calls it in his book "Culture and the knowledge society", a much subtler and maybe anti-economic one. The risks associated to the second wave (the wave of industrialization) are certain causes of the shift of paradigm and of the more and more important emphasis on knowledge. If in the industrial society technology dominated both the economic and the social levels, in the knowledge society man will dominate technology and will have the control of the major directions of progress.

Key words: economy, society, progress, doctrine