



SOCIAL PRACTICE OF INDIVIDUAL SELF-PROTECTION IN THE DIGITAL WORLD AND NON-MATERIAL ECONOMY

PRÁTICA SOCIAL DA AUTOPROTEÇÃO INDIVIDUAL NO MUNDO DIGITAL E ECONOMIA NÃO MATERIAL

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To explore the social implications of individual self-protection in a digital and intangible economic environment, highlighting the challenges of maintaining personal ethics and individuality.

Methods: The study utilizes a variety of analytical methods including historical-legal, comparative-legal, system-structural, and statistical analysis to explore the transformation in social practices related to individuality in the digital age.

Results: The study identifies a significant shift towards a non-material economy where intellectual capital plays a crucial role. It discusses the resistance against the commodification of private life and the importance of personal ethics in virtual interactions.

Conclusion: The research emphasizes the need for a new socio-philosophical discourse that adapts to the changing realities of a postindustrial capitalist society, stressing the importance of creativity and the production of personality in maintaining the uniqueness of individuals.

Keywords: Social philosophy; Social practices; Virtual world; Social creativity; Macro-social changes.





RESUMO

Objetivo: Explorar as implicações sociais da autoproteção individual em um ambiente econômico digital e intangível, destacando os desafios de manter a ética pessoal e a individualidade.

Métodos: O estudo utiliza uma variedade de métodos analíticos, incluindo análise histórico-jurídica, comparativa-jurídica, estrutural-sistêmica e estatística para explorar a transformação nas práticas sociais relacionadas à individualidade na era digital.

Resultados: O estudo identifica uma mudança significativa em direção a uma economia não material onde o capital intelectual desempenha um papel crucial. Discute a resistência contra a mercantilização da vida privada e a importância da ética pessoal nas interações virtuais.

Conclusão: A pesquisa enfatiza a necessidade de um novo discurso sócio-filosófico que se adapte às realidades em mudança de uma sociedade capitalista pós-industrial, destacando a importância da criatividade e da produção da personalidade na manutenção da singularidade dos indivíduos.

Palavras-chave: Filosofia social; Mundo digital; Economia não material; Autoproteção individual; Capital intelectual.

INTRODUCTION

According to the postmodern neomarxist F. Jameson 's (1991) understanding of modernity, the modern era is the era of continuing capitalism. In the same vein, we can mention the work of Russian author P.A. Orekhovsky, who says that in order to remain in "reality", we must continue to analyze either the shortcomings or new features of the capitalist political-economic system. The era of capitalism is not over, and it can still be described using the theoretical positions of intellectual Marxism (Orekhovsky, 2020).

First of all, the cultural logic of the late capitalist era is reflected in the postmodernist view of reality and, as such, affects virtually all aspects of sociocultural reality. Postmodernism in its genealogy is not a radically new theory, at the same time, displays the main edges of the culture and consciousness of modern capitalism. Unlike Marxist theory, postmodernism is completely alien to the idea of social creative practice to liberate the world from various forms of exclusion. Therefore, postmodernism is powerless in solving these problems.

Secondly, capitalism has several socio-historical stages, each of which leaves the possibility of using Marxist theory for analysis. Marxism itself is transformed at every





stage of history under the influence of the changed situation in society and economy, remaining relevant and in demand.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the research is based on the ideas of post-Marxism, in which the agenda of classical Marxism is aligned with a "postmodern reference frame", where the basic positions of classical Marxism, such as "class analysis and the special role of the working class", are rejected. This is due to the emergence of new "identity politics", new types of their oppression irreducible to the exploitation of the "working class" specifically, new forms of social exclusion and reduced risks of economic expropriation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Today we live in the postindustrial era of the capitalist "world-system" (Wallerstein, 2011). The distinctive features of this era are: deindustrialization and the formation of new diversified structures of individualized goods, the emergence of intangible economy and the increasing importance of the subjective factor in the process of macro-social changes. Let us highlight several trends.

Trend 1. The postfordist economy is a diversified production system that prioritizes the creation of exclusive, custom-made, unique goods. This type of economy creates a postmodern culture, which is alien to the idea of standardization and monotony.

According to the concept of L. Boltanski and A. Esquerre (2017), today there is a special economy - "enrichment economy", which is both an appendage of the industrial economy and its competitor, which is both an appendage of the industrial economy and its competitor. It is a synthesis of a number of industries of production and trade: luxury, tourism, art, culture, antiques trade, exclusive design and museum business. Within the framework of the "enrichment economy", the product of each of these industries increases the value of the products of all the others - that is, it enriches the goods and thus their sellers. Modern economy is based on the interaction of four forms of valorization - standard (as in industrial capitalism), active (in the form of goods that increase in value over time), collectible (where the value is set by means of a





subtle game with the rarity of the collected objects, completeness of the collection, originality of selection criteria, etc.) and trend. Modern economy is based on the production of some unique things, and it is their uniqueness that serves to justify their high value necessary for preservation. To justify uniqueness, the combined capabilities of all the above industries are used, such as historical specifics of place, geographical characteristics, connection with contemporary art, limited circulation, famous trademark, and so on.

The new "economy of enrichment" that has emerged in the twenty-first century, which criticizes the mass production of standard objects, among other things, expresses concern about the processes of unification of the people who create these objects. In such an economy, new creative communities of interest emerge, which are attached to various professional situations - artists, stylists, photographers, jewelers, designers, etc. The creator in the "economy of enrichment" in order to justify his claims to monetary profit, must make a name for himself, turning it into an individual trademark, fixed legally (Sultanova et al., 2023; Ermakov et al., 2022). In the conditions of market competition, the personal trademark of a creator, for example, a designer, and the product (thing) created by him should have a systemic characteristic of uniqueness.

The modern economy is aimed at the production of consumer value of mass consumption products rather than mass production. This means that the object of the creator's activity to create additional consumer value can be a single object, which will necessarily be mass consumed due to the social demand for its uniqueness.

Trend 2. The emergence of the non-material economy sector implies the development of the "economy of self-realization" of an individual. The economy of self-realization is essentially an "economy of mass uniqueness". The production of standard goods and services (including those covering basic human needs) is increasingly given over to automated solutions. A unique product created by a unique talent, rather than a standard product created by standard processes and competencies, begins to have the highest value. There is a gradual transformation of the "labor market" into a "network of unique talents" - and in this model every person must find an opportunity to use his or her talent for work and self-realization. The results of creativity become a new kind of capital through intellectual rents or patents. Richard Florida writes about it in his book "The rise of the creative class" (Florida, 2019).





Neomarxists call for a rethinking of the concept of "labor": from labor as a condition of self-sufficiency and survival (Srnicek & Williams, 2015) - to labor as a creative activity in free time freed from work, allowing a person to reveal his or her potential. However, the realization of a person's creative potential actually turns into a set of purposeful practices to reproduce the same capitalist forms of production process, creating simulacra (securities, trademarks, services of developers, realtors, marketers, advertising, etc.), in which there is no socio-economic content, creation of public goods and the possibility of developing human qualities. For example, the practice of elevating an individual in a creative competition for attention and popularity is becoming increasingly popular. New "identity politics" are emerging - personalities (celebrities, attention leaders, discourse invaders) and impersonalities (the mass of consumers of the results of image-making activities). Such forms of creative activity do not produce added value, but they do make a profit. Creative activity is subject to the laws of the market and a new social layer is formed - freelancers.

Trend 3. The development of non-material economy forms an image of the future of mankind without material production. More precisely, it is assumed that the creation of the necessary shrinking amount of material goods is left to machines. However, the era of postindustrial capitalism is acquiring new features dangerous for humans with the emergence of artificial intelligence and 3D printing.

According to Harvard Business School professor Sh. Zuboff, the modern world is entering a new political economy era of "surveillance capitalism". In her famous book "The Age of Capitalism Surveillance" she says that in surveillance capitalism the experience accumulated by people is unilaterally appropriated by private companies and transformed into big data streams belonging to them. Some of this data is used to improve goods and services. And the rest is considered "behavioral surplus" and valued for its wealth of predictive signals. This predictive data is sent to state-of-the-art machine intelligence factories, where it is computerized into extremely profitable predictive products that anticipate people's current and future decisions. These predictive products are then traded in what Zuboff calls "behavior futures markets" (Zuboff, 2018).

A new type of goods appears - "personal data" - "behavioral surplus", which includes, for example, the manner and pace of running, hobbies, hunting for a parking space, face, voice, emotions, social ties, secret habits - i.e. human actions - a new economy is formed - "economy of action", the purpose of which is to predict the





automated behavior of the individual and turn him into an additional "raw material appendage". Does modern man want to turn his private space into a commodity, and what forms of resistance does he have in his arsenal?

In the book "The End of the Individual. A Philosopher's Journey to the Land of AI" G. Koenig (Koenig, 2019), drawing on the ideas of Spinoza (on the consciousness of causes and the nature of affects), Nassim Taleb's "Antifragility" (the fragility of data, which in the event of an unforeseen shock can be destroyed or lead to false correlations ("black swan"), Daniel Dennett ("Deliberation" - the reflexivity of intention, where the individual becomes the "free willer" not of the final but of the prior decision as the site of identity formation), concludes: it is possible to accept the achievements of technology, while building a reliable alternative to both American utilitarianism and Chinese digital totalitarianism, through a reasserted unique essence of the individual - as a way of forming the individual in all its originality in the ability to take on a profound and conscious choice with the "right to make a mistake". Such a choice may not be very effective in terms of usefulness, but without which it is impossible to form individuality (in the context of artificial intelligence it is an independent influence on the parameters that control AI - the right to disconnect from the social network, refusal to accept cookies, notifications, the method of "blackout", etc.). This is personal ethics - the rules of technology use that people choose for themselves and commit themselves to observe, without requiring others to observe them and without making them a universal law (Sultanova et al., 2023; Ermakov et al., 2022).

These trends in a new way actualize the discussion of the era of postindustrial capitalism in the Marxist discourse. At the same time, such concepts as "commodity", "surplus value", "use value", "productive forces", "production relations", "labor" need a new reading due to the emergence of "real single person" in the agenda of interests. New problems for research arise, such as the practices of social creativity, production of personality, formation and protection of the unique essence of the individual. New ways of construction are needed, which will not be built according to the logic of standardization and unification, but will be based on the principles of increasing diversity and uniqueness, "generative involvement" (including the involvement of the creative potential of people and nature). Coordination perspectives will have to combine cognition, creativity and activity into a single action - what can be called "thought-feeling-action" to create both individual and community projects.





In the contemporary era of postindustrial capitalism, the arrival of the "economy of mass uniqueness," the "creative class," and the subjectivity of the "free willer" demonstrates the features of a transitional era into a new postcapitalist era.

Staying with the agenda of Modernity, we see a change in the face of capitalist society and its economy due to the emergence of creative labor, which leads to a new contradiction in the basic law of surplus value. The new surplus value generated by the creative activity of individuals cannot be measured quantitatively, since the act of creation is the result of the coincidence of circumstances, the unique destiny of the creator immersed directly in the cultural-historical and technological environment. The transcendental condition of all social activity - the objectification of the existentiality of a single person, responsible for the production of unique creative activity - enters the socio-philosophical agenda.

In the era of "economy of self-actualization" the problem of social creativity of the main element of "productive forces" - the human being, is interpreted not simply as the subject's work to create the results of creativity, but as subjectivity/process of unique creative activity, requiring the development of special skills associated with the actualization of existential experience. Such subjective activity can be described in the context of specific social relations in the concept of "uniqueness of personal being", which is an ensemble of objectification of existential and interiorization of social experience by a specific single subjectivity. The activity of unique creative subjectivity, exteriorized in the social, possesses unique significance in the social sense - especially when a person creates something that is not only creatively new, but also unique, unknown to others, thus meaningfully enriching his or her own kind in the universal-historical sense.

Nowadays, special attention should be paid to the processes of resistance of an individual unique personality to the domination of the world of the Big Other. The research search for the space of "resistance" is connected with objective conditions in modern society, in which direct communications are decreasing and non-direct communications are increasing (the virtual world of Internet technologies). The increase in non-direct communications and the increasing role of the Other threatens one's own self to become a stranger. With the dominance of the Other, the "I" begins to function as "the other of the other of the other" (F. Nietzsche) and disintegrates into a multitude of pre-individual formations. Hence the special strategy of modern





communication - avoiding the gaze of the Other and the desire of the "I" to be "invisible" or "intimate" (Nietzsche, 2013).

"Intimacy" is a modus of detached being. The need to preserve the "intimate" for the individual is connected, on the one hand, with the inevitability of its existence as the last stage of the "inner" for the individual, and on the other hand, as a guarantor of one's freedom and the freedom of the Other. "Intimacy" is the most personal aspect of subjectivity in spiritual, mental and physical dimensions.

The inclusion of modern man in various forms of virtual reality, in a sense, represents a natural evolution of human culture, expressed in symbolism, rationality and rejection of materiality. It seems that the craving of modern man for a new symbolic virtual reality is explained, first of all, by the desire to escape the separateness and exclusion of the individual in the real world. Having realized and accepted his "isolation", having agreed to sit alone in front of a computer monitor, our man chooses virtual space as an opportunity to find his "close one" in a wide social field. The use of new technologies and total computerization of not only production, but also life leads to the phenomenon of the so-called home-centered-society, a kind of "society at home": "both in the sphere of production and in the sphere of material support of his private life a person exists quite autonomously, the new stage of division of labor allows him to stop being and feeling himself a partial individual, a function of some common large process, a cog in a huge mechanism" (Tereshchenko & Shatunova, 2003). The rejection of real communications in favor of virtual communication enables an individual to become the subject of constructing his "project", to create a clone of his individuality and to be a full-fledged author of any actions, desires and experiences of this clone (new identity). The forced passivity and conformism of a person of the real world turns into the activity of the author of "nicknames" in the virtual, illusory world. Illusion in the literal and figurative sense places the "virtual person" (author and work at the same time) in the situation of playing secondary roles after the real society. The fragmentation of the personality, suppressed by the objectivity of real social processes, acquires a chance to restore its integrity in another reality. This opportunity has a huge attractive power, as it creates a comfortable, controlled by the person himself, type of communication.

What dangers await the virtual constructor of communications?

Firstly, the duality of human nature - soul and body - still remains the essential definition of man. Any "inflections" in one or another direction lead to asymmetry of his





essential self-expression. The expansion of the rational, on which virtual reality is based, overrides the bodily expression of the human being. Text and language practices, through which all virtual communication is built, do not create the fullness of intimate physical and energetic contact between people. The physical proximity necessary for the transmission of additional information through gestures, shared silence, eye expression, touching, and so on, remains "behind the scenes" of textual or verbal communication. The concept of "co-communication" is broader than the concept of communication, and it contains a much larger number of meanings, including irrational and sensual in nature. The sensual impulses and energy of co-experiencing the events of the real world are "removed from the brackets" of the virtual type of communication. And this "remnant" does not create a complete picture of self-expression for a person as an integral anthropological universe.

Secondly, many psychologists explain the "escape" to virtual reality by the desire of modern individuals to minimize their share of responsibility and gain more freedom due to the anonymity of being in Internet networks. This phenomenon itself deeply contradicts the fact that the freedom of an individual directly depends on the degree of his/her responsibility. Greater responsibility implies greater freedom. Freedom and responsibility have never been treated as mutually exclusive characteristics of human existence. It is even worth emphasizing to a greater extent the necessity of personal responsibility in order for an individual to fully feel his right to freedom. Therefore, the illusory irresponsibility of the virtual world can only lead to the illusory individual freedom, which will be reflected in the internal conflict of the individual.

Third, the separation of consciousness into author and work (virtual roles) can lead to both fragmentation of mental "images" of the world and false communication. "Virtual man" can become entangled in his narratives and lose control of his authorship. Works can become false identities and absorb the individual as a subject of construction. This will cause not only the real world but also the real in the virtual world to lose its connotations and completely "confuse" the individual. There will be a substitution of values, life orientations and goals.

Fourth, the exclusion of the human personality, as an almost inevitable process of the real social world, acquires its forms in the virtual one as well. Virtual reality itself is an absolute product of the human mind. The development and expansion of computer and information technology capabilities turn into an independent, objective





reality for man himself. The new entity begins to live according to its own laws, requiring from man an increasing investment of the mind. The dream of creating artificial intelligence is discussed not only as a romantic and heuristic idea, but also as a new danger for man (along with global problems of mankind). It can be assumed that sooner or later, according to the same laws of dialectics, humanity, as the author of the virtual world, will turn not just into a User, but into a proletarian, who alienates his intelligence, working for the world Computer and Software Developers for hire.

The mentioned problems arising when an individual turns to virtual reality will inevitably lead to new forms of internal readiness of an individual to social experience with the Other through the use of a set of individual social practices of self-protection against the totality of "multiple relations of power" produced by mass/consumer society and negative factors of influence of modern technological civilization on human existence.

CONCLUSIONS

The socio-philosophical discourse nowadays is becoming relevant in such a direction as "sociology of social existences", where social event - "human action in collective contexts" - is taken as the main object of study. And that is why classical Marxism and even Neomarxism need to be supplemented. The increasing importance of "social existences" in the processes of macro-social changes shows that the homogeneous mass/globalization form of society has reached its limit: social behavior has become "standardized", conformal, serene. Against this background, there is a demand for multipolarity/multidimensionality of the palette of social subjects, situationality and hybridity of social practices and, as a consequence, Marxist theory needs new anthropological approaches. This configuration of the social world-system is based on the ontology of individuation, both at the level of the individual and at the level of cultures, nations, civilizations. This ontology of individualization, projected according to the principles of difference and particularity, assumes the fact that each subject has the will to the power of discovering its irreplaceable unique place in the structure of social being, its unique existentiality, which in universal-historical development completes the essence of human society to its fullness and integrity. The task of contemporary social philosophy is to describe this new ontology and to develop





new cultural syntheses of post-Marxist theories on the basis of the existential approach.

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