

SOCIAL UNCERTAINTY PRECARITY INEQUALITY
Berlin – Germany

Report 2023

The New Normal.
Elements of a New structural and widespread
Precariousness

Proceedings

International Conference on the topic “*Routinization of the crisis mode in our societies. New elements of a New structural and widespread Precariousness*”, promoted by the S.U.P.I. Network, international research group on Precariousness and Social Uncertainty, in collaboration with the Italian Institute EURISPES.

Berlin-Rome, March 24 2023

PRESENTATION

S.U.P.I. – Social Uncertainty Precarity Inequality Berlin - Germany

SUPI Network is an interdisciplinary European Research Group established by European and international scholars and experts. Objectives of the Network are: a) to analyse and evaluate in depth and with a systemic methodology the complex topics of social precarity, uncertainty and inequality; b) to provide proposals to social policies in order to reinforce social cohesion this way covering all the questions related to social exclusion/inclusion in a positive and efficient way.

SUPI Network was formally founded in Berlin on 1st February 2007 during the International Conference “*Processes of Social Reorientation within the Social Structure*” in cooperation with Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales – Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Germany). The Group is widely open to the cooperation of qualified European and International experts.

Coordinator of the SUPI Network is Prof. *Rolf Dieter HEPP*, Freie Universität Berlin (Germany). Prof. R.D. Hepp is also member of the Scientific Committee of Eurispes Institute, Rome (Italy)

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TABLE OF CONTENT

CONTRIBUTIONS

Action and handling of the crisis in society

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*Co-ordinator of the SUPI European Network on Social Uncertainty, Precarity, Inequality
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The Scale of Precarious Employment in Russia among Entities.

The proposal of new key indicators for analyses

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Local Organization of Social Services and Widespread Precariousness

Ferenc BÓDI

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Social Stochasticity and Uncertainty as a Factor in Youth Labor Mobility and Entrepreneurship Development

Marina BOGATYREVA

*Professor, Candidate of Sociological Sciences, Associate Professor (Labor Economics), Head of the Department of Digital Technologies in Economics and Management, Ufa University of Science and Technology
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Emerging forms of precarity in the arts and aesthetics.

Ontological precarity of body aesthetics

António M. DUARTE

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Precarity – far more and deeper than precariousness

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On the relationship between education and precarity

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Precarization of power

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Social Precarity and Sustainability Processes: the Open Problem of the Social Taxonomy.

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Features of precarious employment in Russia

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The SUPI European Network and the EURISPES Institute express their warmest recognition and appreciation for the active participation and contribution of stimuli and ideas given on the occasion of the 2023 conference in particular by the following colleagues:

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A special thanks for the valid professional contribution given on the occasion of the conference SUPI 2023 by:

Dr. Gianluca TORNINI, collaborator of the International Department of EURISPES, for the professional work carried out in the relationship system with the experts and in the elaboration of the written contributions,

Mr. Alessandro PECCI, computer technician, of the EURISPES secretariat, for the digital service and the efficiency in organizing and monitoring the video connections and the registration of the event.

Action and handling of the crisis in society

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Introduction

Two years ago, the Corona crisis dominated the political-media, scientific and everyday discourse. Before Coronavirus, the climate crisis was the media-dominating phenomenon. In the past two decades, we have been confronted with the so-called refugee and migration crisis, the banking, financial and economic crisis, the sovereign debt and euro crisis, the crisis of democracy, (popular) parties and representation, the crisis of the welfare state, the media crisis, the education crisis and the demographic crisis. In addition, there are humanitarian crises as well as intra-societal or inter-state conflicts and wars, which are perceived as crises. Not to forget, finally, relationship, marriage or family crises and individual crises such as depression, burnout or midlife crisis. Individual economic sectors or companies are constantly in crisis. In medicine, a critical turning point in the course of a disease is defined as a crisis.

1-The word "crisis" and the evolution of its multiple meanings and implications

The term crisis has a long tradition dating back to Greek antiquity. The etymological origin of the word lies in the Greek noun *krísis*, which means dispute, judgment, distinction, decision, or turning point, and in the complementary verb *krínein*, which translates as to examine, separate, part, choose, decide, dispute, or fight. In addition to its use in political, legal-forensic, theological contexts, crisis was used especially in a medical context, denoting the final phase of the disease process with a turn toward recovery or death. Overall, crisis originally "*aimed at a final, irrevocable decision. The term implied sharpened alternatives that no longer permitted revision: success or failure, right or wrong, life or death, finally salvation or damnation*" (Koselleck 2006: 204).

Rousseau's observations mark a turning point because he did not only mean the alternative between catastrophe and recovery in the sense of a return to the old order, but also associated revolution with it as the possibility of something new and a better and higher social order. In the course of the American and French Revolutions, this view spread, and the concept of crisis now referred to momentous sociopolitical decision-making situations.

Although the semantic expansion of the concept of crisis took place through political language usage, since the 19th century the economic concept of crisis in particular represented a new everyday experience and further expanded the associative space of crisis. Of course, economic crises were not a new phenomenon at that time, but the logic and structure as well as the frequency and manifestation of economic crises changed with the establishment of modern capitalism - and with it their social perception and scientific analysis. *Karl Marx* and *Friedrich Engels* in particular related crisis to economic development and developed the first "*sociological term, life or death, ultimately salvation or damnation*" (Koselleck 2006: 204).

In addition to the periodically recurring economic crises, the profound transformation of societies in the 19th century contributed to the growing importance of the concept of crisis for the description of social conditions and forced the further scientific examination of the concept of crisis. It seemed particularly suitable for characterizing the uncertain, dynamic and open social development that resulted from the capitalist penetration of the economy and society and manifested itself, among other things, in the economic-social consequences of industrialization, urbanization, the founding of political associations, parties and trade unions, or in the progressive democratization of state and society and the first beginnings of welfare state services. It is therefore not surprising that it was precisely at that time that sociology emerged as an independent scientific discipline. Sociology emerged "*from the spirit of crisis*" (Reppinger 1999).

Through such forms of subjectivization of the crisis, the actors are identified as carriers of the .respective crisis. With their behaviour the Actors are an active part of the crisis.

In anchoring such views in social discourses, a tried and tested "neoliberal" tradition of dismantling social security systems is taken up and at the same time reinforced by fears and feelings of guilt in order to achieve an orientation of the population toward the restrictions on the potential for action during the pandemic, since measures such as lockdowns and/or restrictions on freedom must be accepted as necessary by the actors.

Fears and feelings of guilt are mobilized for this purpose. Targeted or untargeted confusion is promoted by a systematic production of uncertainty, which on the one hand plays with the fears, anxieties and hopes of the actors, but on the other hand tries to channel and orient them towards an attitude of acceptance of the "necessary" subjugation strategies to fight the virus.

2-The debt economy and the integration between present and future

"Debt" does not only mean economy but at the same time involves a whole arsenal of security techniques, calculations, measurements and an establishment of equivalences through which the entire existence of the debtor is shaped. Thus, the debt situation does not only refer to the present, but involves coordinations, conditionings and orientations to the future life contexts of the creditor, as well as the debtor.

"In the light of the neoliberal debt economy, the Second Essay of the Genealogy takes on a new topicality: debt is not only an economic mechanism, it is also a security-state technique of government aimed at reducing the uncertainty of the behavior of the governed. By training the governed to "promise" (to honor their debt), capitalism exercises "control over the future," since debt obligations allow one to foresee, calculate, measure, and establish equivalences between current and future behavior. The effects of the power of debt on subjectivity (guilt and responsibility) allow capitalism to bridge the gap between present and future." (Lazzarato Maurizio, The Making of the Indebted Man. An Essay on the Neoliberal Condition, 2012, p.45).

Since debts create a bond, a relationship between the present and the future, between creditor and debtor at the same time, the disposal of the future flows into the network of relationships as a "social fact" in *Durkheim's* sense, or determines and arranges the roles at the two poles of the oppositional relationship creditor/debtor. Thus, the future is immediately structured, objectified and subjectified by sorting it into the corresponding chains of action.

"The debt economy is an economy of time and subjectivation in a specific sense. Indeed, neoliberalism is an economy turned toward the future, since finance is a promise of future wealth and, consequently, incommensurable with actual wealth. No use making a fuss because the economy's "present" and "future" fail to match up! What matters is finance's goal of reducing what will be to what is, that is, reducing the future and its possibilities to current power relations. From this perspective, all financial innovations have one sole purpose: possessing the future in advance by objectivizing it. This objectivation is of a completely different order from that of labor time; objectivizing time, possessing it in advance, means subordinating all possibility of choice and decision which the future holds to the reproduction of capitalist power relations. In this way, debt appropriates not only the present labor time of wage-earners and of the population in general, it also preempts non-chronological time, each person's future as well as the future of society as a whole. The principal explanation for the strange sensation of living in a society without time, without possibility, without foreseeable rupture, is debt." (Lazzarato M., Ibidem, 55f.)

The dismantling of security systems produces an insecure world that carries indeterminacy within itself and is tailored to precarious life contexts. Corona control and combat ties in with these tendencies in order to be able to develop mobilization potentials.

Indeterminacy is a permanent crossroads;- in which decisions are based on poverty.

During the pandemic, seemingly all political and social actions and activities focus on fighting the pandemic. Pandemic control is the focus of political and public interest. To this end, the population must be mobilized to support the measures and restrictions. *Ernst Jünger* considers mobilization to be a formative factor of modernity that structures, orders and aligns individuals. This

refers not only to mobilization for World War I, but also determines the fate of the worker and the clerk, who are encouraged to move constantly. (Compare *Ernst Jünger, The Worker*). According to *Agamben*, the state of exception that is sought with the mobilization of the masses is described as authoritarian rule, following and echoing *Foucault*.

"Sovereign is who decides on the state of exception." (*Schmitt, Carl: 1996*). Whoever can determine the state of emergency is the sovereign. As early as 1899, *Thorstein Veblen* pointed out in the "*Theory of the Leisure Class*" that the existing society, although peaceful, was built on a war-oriented system based on subjugation.

"During the predatory stage proper the distinction between the leisure and the labouring class is in some degree a ceremonial distinction only. The able bodied men jealously stand aloof from whatever is in their apprehension, menial drudgery; but their activity in fact contributes appreciably to the sustenance of the group. The subsequent stage of quasi-peaceable industry is usually characterised by an established chattel slavery, herds of cattle, and a servile class of herdsmen and shepherds; industry has advanced so far that the community is no longer dependent for its livelihood on the chase or on any other form of activity that can fairly be classed as exploit. From this point on, the characteristic feature of leisure class life is a conspicuous exemption from all useful employment.

The normal and characteristic occupations of the class in this mature phase of its life history are in form very much the same as in its earlier days. These occupations are government, war, sports, and devout observances. Persons unduly given to difficult theoretical niceties may hold that these occupations are still incidentally and indirectly "productive"; but it is to be noted as decisive of the question in hand that the ordinary and ostensible motive of the leisure class in engaging in these occupations is assuredly not an increase of wealth by productive effort. At this as at any other cultural stage, government and war are, at least in part, carried on for the pecuniary gain of those who engage in them; but it is gain obtained by the honourable method of seizure and conversion. These occupations are of the nature of predatory, not of productive, employment. Something similar may be said of the chase, but with a difference. As the community passes out of the hunting stage proper, hunting gradually becomes differentiated into two distinct employments. On the one hand it is a trade, carried on chiefly for gain; and from this the element of exploit is virtually absent, or it is at any rate not present in a sufficient degree to clear the pursuit of the imputation of gainful industry. On the other hand, the chase is also a sport— an exercise of the predatory impulse simply. As such it does not afford any appreciable pecuniary incentive, but it contains a more or less obvious element of exploit. It is this latter development of the chase — purged of all imputation of handicraft — that alone is meritorious and fairly belongs in the scheme of life of the developed leisure class". *Veblen, 1899, p. 20*

3-The control society: from numbers to codes

According to *Foucault*, the plague forms an ideal model as a "dream of the order politicians", All actors are fixed in one place, controlled and monitored. The panoptic principle of organization provides a model of control and surveillance of individuals, so that disciplining produces subjects. Today, according to *Deleuze*, through mechanisms of the society of control, individual subjects are no longer monitored in a specific place; instead, the methods of surveillance are carried forward by gaining an overview of the movement of actors through fluctuations, which experience an inherent weight and amplification in the pandemic as a real existing threat scenario.

Power, and thus profit, is no longer necessarily gained from disciplining the individual body, but by directing and controlling movements and flows.

According to *Deleuze*, the society of control unfolds primarily through the control of movements, the legibility of bodies and data streams, and the modulation of individuals. Thus, individuals are not fixed and enclosed in single closed institutions but, on the contrary, individuals are kept in constant movement and flexibility. The body is no longer adapted to the large machinery, but is constantly "modulated".

"The disciplinary societies have two poles: the signature that designates the individual, and the number or administrative numeration that indicates his or her position within a mass. This is

because the disciplines never saw any incompatibility between these two, and because at the same time power individualizes and masses together, that is, constitutes those over whom it exercises power into a body and molds the individuality of each member of that body. (Foucault saw the origin of this double charge in the pastoral power of the priest—the flock and each of its animals--but civil power moves in turn and by other means to make itself lay "priest.")

In the societies of control, on the other hand, what is important is no longer either a signature or a number, but a code: the code is a password, while on the other hand disciplinary societies are regulated by watchwords (as much from the point of view of integration as from that of resistance).

The numerical language of control is made of codes that mark access to information, or reject it. We no longer find ourselves dealing with the mass/individual pair. Individuals have become "dividuals," and masses, samples, data, markets, or "banks." Perhaps it is money that expresses the distinction between the two societies best, since discipline always referred back to minted money that locks gold as numerical standard, while control relates to floating rates of exchange, modulated according to a rate established by a set of standard currencies. The old monetary mole is the animal of the space of enclosure, but the serpent is that of the societies of control. We have passed from one animal to the other, from the mole to the serpent, in the system under which we live, but also in our manner of living and in our relations with others. The disciplinary man was a discontinuous producer of energy, but the man of control is undulatory, in orbit, in a continuous network. Everywhere surfing has already replaced the older sports." (Deleuze, p.3)

Closing remark

The societies of control are characterized primarily by the control of movements, the legibility of bodies and data streams, and the modulation of individuals. Thus, I repeat, individuals are not fixed and enclosed in single closed institutions but are kept in constant movement and flexibility. The techniques of domination during the situation's crisis are based on these criteria.

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The Scale of Precarious Employment in Russia among Entities. The proposal of new key indicators for analyses

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My colleagues and I are continuing to explore the phenomenon of precarious work. In the last period we have worked in particular to select and examine the results of the related statistical surveys conducted in Russia, by institutions and research centers, both state and non-state. Our analyzes have highlighted that it is currently possible to have many assessments, even considerably diversified among them, on the phenomenon of precarious work in Russia, its nature and its extent.

The reason for this is linked to the fact that this phenomenon is measured using very different indicators. Consequently, with our team we have first of all identified and defined the indicators which in our opinion are the most representative and significant for the studies, analysis and evaluation of precarious work.

All available indicators that we collected in the main research sources and classified were tested for multi-collinearity (their pairwise correlation was carried out). At the same time, in-depth evaluations were developed, focused on the most significant indicators of precarious work. Therefore, on the basis of the results of two studies, a selection was made of the indicators of precarious work considered among the most valid and functional. In this operation, the experts also proceeded to indicate the priorities - in relation to their importance - to be attributed to the indicators of precarious work. At the end of this operation, they identified three groups: indicators with high, medium and low priority levels, calculated with respect to an average reference value. The indicators defined in terms of high priority have been identified as the key indicators for the evaluation of precarious work.

A total of 10 indicators were selected, identified as key indicators: the first is related to employment based on verbal agreement without an employment contract; the second concerns forced unpaid leave taken on behalf of the employer; subsequently, in order, the following are indicated: the lack of paid holidays, the reduction in salary or the reduction in working hours decided unilaterally by the employer; the last, among the selected indicators, concerns the level of the main income from work which does not ensure the sustainability of the households' financial situation.

The following have been identified as non-significant indicators of precarious work: in the first place, employment with a contract signed according to the rules of civil law; secondly, hiring with an employment contract for a period of less than one year; thirdly, the late payment of wages with the accumulation of arrears; then the value of informal income linked to the main occupation and, finally, the length of the working week in the main workplace: whether it is more than 40 hours or less than 30 hours.

After having identified the series of key indicators, we then proceeded to apply them and, again, to measure the level of precarious work among the organized entities with reference to the year 2021. The employees of these organized structures were divided into three groups : the first group, characterized by an unstable job, has reached a value equal to about 87% of total employment; the second group, the so-called transition group, to which one or more non-key indicators of precarious work referred, reached a value equal to about 5% of total employment. The third group, characterized by stable and regular employment, has reached a level equal to almost 7% of the total.

In summary, our measurements, conducted by applying the series of key indicators that we have selected as the most representative and functional, have highlighted that around 42% of the employees of the organized entities in the first group, i.e. people with a unstable work, presents a high concentration of precariousness in one's life, professional and personal conditions.

In conclusion: the selection of meaningful and representative indicators of precarious work allows our team to be confident in the accuracy of the assessments made. It is on this basis that we can also proceed to analyze and critically evaluate the results conducted by other institutes and study and analysis centres, with initiatives of a comparative nature. In this regard, we are ready to verify the validity of the analysis tools that we have identified and selected also internationally.

An important reference, which I mention by way of example, are the periodic analyzes conducted by the *International Labor Organization (ILO)*; of particular value is the Report "*Global Employment Trend for Youth 2022. Investing in transforming futures for young people*", published on the occasion of International Youth Day 2022. The Report, in particular, invites us to evaluate all the elements of uncertainty with a holistic approach affecting the labor market and the condition of youth. This is the scientific challenge that our team is ready to take up with comparative analyzes relating to the application of the system of indicators that it has managed to define. From the general considerations of the ILO Report:

The uncertainty surrounding labour market prospects for young people is significant. The principal risk factors affecting labour market projections in general are the future path of the COVID-19 crisis, geopolitical risks, macroeconomic risks such as the impact of supply chain disruptions and rising inflation, and the potential permanent damage wreaked by the crisis on the fabric of labour markets (ILO 2022).

As far as young people are concerned, there are additional uncertainties regarding the extent to which employers will rely on them during the recovery, or the speed with which they can transition into the labour market. At the same time, the crisis may have accelerated structural change in the labour market (ILO 2022), where growing sectors present an opportunity for young people at the start of their careers. (ILO, Geneva, 2022, pg.26).

Globally –the Report adds - in 2021 some 75 million young people were unemployed, 408 million were in employment, and 732 million were out of the labour force. (ILO, Geneva, 2022, pg.27).

This is the general framework we want/must refer to with our studies and analyzes on labor and social precariousness.

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Local organization of Social Services and widespread Precariousness

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1-The Local Organization of Social Services – LOSS

The *Local organization of social services* belongs to the complex system related to the well-being of the society mainly as public goods and public services provided to the clients locally in their own local society and on a local level.

The different public goods and social services can be categorized by the type of the providers, central government, regional or province government, county authority, local government, non-government organizations, civil, church institutions and organizations and so on. Three main sectors that can be separated from each other are *public education, health care as well and social support systems*.

The *supply side* of the local social services can be divided by their formal appearance so the *formal organizations* can be highlighted as those that function on public money in accordance with the laws and led by appointed or elected personnel.

At the same time, several *informal institutions* ensure that invisible and elementary social safety net exists. However, in the case of a crisis its role becomes a significant factor. *The most fundamental informal social institution is the family itself* with its network of relatives. Furthermore, several important *social networks* are responsible for the citizen's social safety such as the *neighborhood, friends, workplace relations, as well as professional relationships*.

The function of the Local Organization of Social Services (LOSS) is determined by the structure of the *demand side* forms a special pattern in each local society much like the genome of a living organism. Each local society has a different pattern on the demand side that is dependent on multi-endogenous factors:

- Social structure of the inhabitants,
- Advanced state of the municipalities and abundance in their environment,
- Structure of the local economy,
- Experience of the local culture and tradition,
- Relationship of the local politics (self-government) to the central politics, and to the political systems on national level.
- The demand side of the LOSS can be approached from *life situations*. The questions are, what is the capacity of the population for reproduction and what is the quality of life, what is the employment situation of the career beginners, what is the women's role in the local society, what are the conditions for children's education are, what is the housing situation, as well as what is the general health condition, and many more for a given locality (local society).
- The fact that the LOSS exists locally means that the needs of the life situations (clients of the demand side) can find satisfaction in the local community. Consequently, the clients do not have to leave their residence where they live their own daily routine. Basically, the LOSS handles ordinary life situations, although, either the big or local society can have a malfunction when the basic institutions become dysfunctional, and they are unable to resolve social problems and deal with the fast social polarization (Fábián 2004).
- The LOSS does not have the task to treat the reasons of social inequality, as it is one that the more complex social politics can treat more effectively in most cases. But it is an indisputable fact that the effective and adequate intervention of social politics, frequently, can be best organized on the local level and in the local society. The goals of social politics if they do not having enough support locally and if the local social efforts do not have enough

encouragement from the higher levels become incomprehensible and unproductive initiatives, even if they had been born of goodwill.

- The precondition for effective social politics is *legitimation*. A social action can be either a bottom up or a top down initiative, but it will be an effective activity and hopefully successful only if it is accepted locally. For example, if the local initiative can form itself into a united system and gets supporting assistance from the higher politics, it does not become a fragmented isolated action (Savova 2021).

2-Historical background

The European welfare state system should not be considered a result of an organic evolution, at least not in the sense that Europe would not have built a new regime of welfare by its own economic sources. Overseas the solution to the crisis was built by a thought-out economic philosophy that was created by representative actors of the society, economics and politics through a multi stage bargaining procedure. However, the new European welfare system was created after a social catastrophe and inspired by the brutal shock of the WW II. The overseas model mixes the American traditions: *pioneer individualism*, a *strong regulative system of the local societies*, embraced by a *strong state and federal consciousness* (Solter et Lawson 2012). WW II and former political shocks caused a modern welfare system. The welfare social model variations written by Esping-Andersen (1991) (1999) has been characterized more and less by strong state care and state responsibility where the individual responsibility and the protective role of the society - especially the one of the local society - has faded for half a century.

3-Creative destruction

The crises should not have only negative impact on the history of the societies. Namely, the crises can induce "creative destruction" (Schumpeter 1939) where the politics discovered some shabby institutions and their weak capacity they pursue a solution for the former hidden problems. Paradigmatic change does not come automatically.

The causes of the system's malfunction cannot be deduced in all cases from the function of the normal system itself (Simon 1982). The supply system reacts upon the functioning of the society, especially upon its reproductive function, respectively upon its own performance, for example upon education and health care (Schultz 1971).

It is very important to see how deeply each solution to the crisis, affect the supply side of the LOSS. The transformation can be *stormy or superficial* it can be also *radical or sluggish*, and it can be fast or slow, and in some case *coward or hazardous*. In the optimal case, the transformation can be a *stormy or superficial change* instead of a *profound change* that can reform durably and effectively *the basic political institutions* (election system, funding of parties, etc.). Seen from another aspect, in the optimal situation, the transformation can be *radical or hazardous change* instead of *prudent change* that can rebuild expediently the *economic frameworks* (tax policy, pension system, base of social security system, energy policy, etc.). Last but not least in Pareto-optimum case *the modest transformation can prevail in the process of the legislation* without a *radical or sluggish routine* (drill) demolishing the inherited traditions (culture of the providing self-identity and elementary norm system) or retaining the obsolete barriers. If a transformation affects only the surface (in extreme case, only the name of the institution has been changed or the leader of the institution has been replaced by a new leader without any new conceptions) there cannot be any structural change ergo there is no chance to increase the effectiveness of the institutions.

1. If the dimensions such as *the radical and modest, the superficial and stormy, the coward or hazardous* would be illustrated in a common system it could be easily recognizable. The transformation would be more sustainable if equilibrium points of the three dimensions could meet in a joint equilibrium point. But the three different equilibrium points should stand close to each another (Pareto-optimum).

2. It can be observed that the power ranking among the different regions could be changed significantly following the crisis. Former tail-ender or medium-capacity regions could become flagship – former strong regions could become medium-power or tail-ender regions (Pennsylvania, California). Kondratiev cycles: saturation point and - new goods - and new technologies appear in the production - global economic paradigmatic change.
3. Those regions could turn out well from the crisis, which could break down quickly the former economic structure, and they could create or accept new technologies or new economic structure. Following Schultz's theses, it can be established that the chance of the success would be more likely where there is strong human capital would be more in a region. There will be advantage there is strong education performing and high health culture as well as strong social norms (Schultz 1971).

According to the experience of the last century it can be concluded that those countries or regions that have achieved a better position in the world economic competition are those which had been investing in *human capital* (education, health culture, socio norm, etc.) for several generations. Those countries or regions, which could not have had another way or had narrow-minded politics and did not make effort enough in the area of the *human resources*, those ones have a heavy disadvantage. Matthew's rule is felt: “*For to every person who has something, even more will be given, and he will have more than enough; but the person who has nothing, even the little that he has will be taken away from him.*” (M25.29)

4-Changing forces. The learning organization

Equilibrium exists in the LOSS as an essential attribute of the Social System, furthermore, the equilibrium is effected during the transmission period when the LOSS changes between two historical epochs, for example during the New Deal programs. Equilibrium can prevail only in optimal circumstances and can be expected in a democratic political system and market economy conditions. If one reviews the remarkable education reforms of the last century according to the power transfer, there are different sorts of cycles and two dominate poles: *lay participation* and *control of professional organizations* (lasting three decades from the 1960s till the 1990s) considering the practices of the Anglo-Saxon countries (McGinn 2002: 19).

The development of the educational administration has been characterized by special recursive cycles in the epoch of the welfare state (McGinn2002). The development was seeking the condition of a supply-demand equilibrium (Bódi 2014) where there was a strong endeavour to rationalize more and more complex systems, trying to create educational systems to meet the individual needs, but at the same time not giving up the principle of the equitable access (Waslander et Pater et Weide 2010). These reform politics had often been based on the faith that several problems could be handled at the same time by raising the efficiency of local management and by trying to increase the teacher's professionalization. Additional objects of the change was to resolve the needs of the families and to harmonize the connection between the administration of education and the private and public schools, essentially, to reduce the difficulties in management caused by the increasing complexity of the educational system.

The decentralization cycle starting in 1960s was, essentially, a response to the criticism about the efficiency of education at the time. In *Change Forces* written by Michael Fullan (1993: 12): “...pouring scads of money into large-scale national curriculum efforts, open plan schools, individualization instruction; and the like. ...Something was bound to come of it...we have never really recovered from the profound disappointment experienced when our expectations turned out to be so far removed from the realities of implementation.” *Change Forces* is an excellent derivative work that is based on the Anglo-Saxon experience; according to Fullan the system of education is a *learning organization*. The learning organization as a depository for the future can prepare the society going into the unknown world to stand up to the changes as well as to fortify the ability of the society to fight for changes. However, education is also a part of the society which is always changing and which is itself forced to change (Bischoff 2009).

Before the Millennium a number of UNESCO's research studies pointed out that *decentralization and centralization* alone do not provide an answer for the negative performance of the education (decrease of the performance, cost management, marketable knowledge, etc.) Several experiments could show that decentralization reform led to corruption and loss of quality (McGinn 2002: 12), although these bad practices were most frequently experienced in states with a weak democratic social environment (Henderson et Vercseg 2010)

There were states that had a strong democratic social environment, a tradition of local educational autonomy where an educational reform started which was based on a national curriculum, and a top-down restructuring has been started which emphasized decentralization (UK 1988, USA 1985). In contrast, the centrists attempted to give more responsibility to the central government than to the local governments (Radó 2010). However, these political intentions supported the involvement and representation of local lay persons and the different interest groups (essentially the more important stakeholders) into management of the schools, furthermore, this trend demanded a stronger top control and accountability (Coleman 1989).

The above example can confirm the hypothesis that the change cannot be examined without the next three elementary conditions: it is necessary to know *who has the main role in the process* (how educated, experienced, what human relations etc.), for example in an education reform the role of the teacher is very important (see more McKinsey's global education report 2007). Every organization, which can be developed, is in essence a special learning organization. This is an organic part of the whole society *embedded into a democratic environment*. Furthermore, according to Fullan's theses, *every change must prevail in the culture* over the formal dimensions of the organizations. In the case when the boundary condition cannot be overcome then the change would become a counterproductive effect and the committed actors of the change would burn out, because the lack of the changes in the culture would lead to empty formalism and a proliferation of the bureaucracy (Fullan 1993: 111) (Sarason 1990: 129).

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Social Stochasticity and Uncertainty as a Factor in Youth Labor Mobility and Entrepreneurship Development

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Introduction

In modern conditions, in the period of stochasticity, uncertainty and ambiguity, the state faces the most difficult task of ensuring sustainable socio-economic development, characterized by the acceleration of scientific and technological progress, maintaining a high level of competition in the global world and protection of national interests of the country. An important role in solving this task is played by entrepreneurial activity as a basis for development of modern market economy, and its stimulation, respectively, can lead to increased competitiveness of labor resources, reduction of unemployment due to the introduction of new jobs.

1 – The essence and content of labor mobility

The peculiarity of modern employment is its instability, precarity and uncertainty. A set of requirements such as a high degree of stress resistance, adaptability, mobility and the ability to work in a multitasking environment has long become common in many vacancies.

In various sources one can find completely different interpretations of the content and essence of labor mobility. Let us consider some of them.

For example, the authors A. M. Dobrusin and E. G. Efimova (1988) understand labor mobility as a special quality of the labor force, reflecting the readiness and ability to meet the changing requirements of the development of productive forces. The founder of the school of sociology in Bashkortostan, Professor N. A. Aitov (1988), V. F. Levandovsky (1991), A. A. Sukhov (1981) defined labor mobility as a process of changing the place of work, position and functions of the worker in the system of social production and division of labor, due to the needs of production development and personal interests. According to L. S. Blyakhman, O. I. Shkaratan (1965), T. I. Zaslavskaya (1986), labor mobility is a set of processes of distribution and redistribution of labor force in accordance with the requirements of economic development in a particular historical space. G. N. Boyarkin (2002), O. D. Vorobyeva (2001) consider labor mobility as one of the elements of the market mechanism, contributing to the efficiency of distribution of workers between different regions.

2 – Development of youth entrepreneurial activity

The development of youth entrepreneurial activity deserves special attention. It is young people today who are capable of taking the country to a new level, and their degree of activity, mobility and willingness to change depends on the provision of strategic resources, the country.

N. Kvedaraite notes that "the entrepreneurial position of young people can contribute to solving the problems of withdrawal of the most active population group and its involvement in activities with high potential in terms of economic development and society as a whole" (2014).

Understanding the importance and necessity of entrepreneurship development in educational institutions of higher and secondary vocational education in Russia has already come and it has entailed the creation of relevant institutions consider Filippova N. V. and Ambarova P. A. (2016).

According to international sociological research organized by the Graduate School of Management, St. Petersburg State University, Professor G.V. Shirokova within the project Global University Entrepreneurial Spirit Students' Survey in different years, including in 2021 there is a steady interest in entrepreneurship among young people (2021). The 2018 National Report notes that "future entrepreneurs and successors are more likely to agree that working as an entrepreneur brings more advantages than disadvantages, and find a career as an entrepreneur attractive to them.

In the Russian sample among students who are going to become employees, there is a more pronounced positive attitude towards a career as an entrepreneur compared to the international sample, but they believe that they do not have enough resources to start their own business. This factor can be seen as one of the obstacles to building an entrepreneurial career, which recognizes both future entrepreneurs and successors. It is worth adding that Russian students agree that starting their own business would bring them a greater sense of satisfaction, which indicates not only a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship, but also the presence of students latent entrepreneurial potential" (2022).

Conclusions

Summarizing the above, it should be noted that at the present stage under the conditions of social stochasticity and uncertainty a rather favorable business environment is formed, contributing to the interest and desire of young people to start to build and develop their own business, which in turn will solve the problem of ensuring sustainable socio-economic development, improving the competitiveness of human resources, reducing unemployment and the introduction of new jobs.

At the same time, it should be noted that the transformation of entrepreneurial orientations of student youth into real entrepreneurial activity requires comprehensive support from the state. Especially important for the young segment are programs that can be implemented at the university level. The development of the entrepreneurial block in the university system can serve as an important tool that can have an impact on the stimulation of entrepreneurial orientation of students aimed at the further implementation and development of their own business projects and ideas.

Thus, the introduction of additional courses in the curricula of universities on the basics of entrepreneurial activity in all areas, as well as the development of individual educational programs on these issues will provide students with access to important knowledge and skills in the field of running their own business.

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Emerging forms of precarity in the arts and aesthetics. Ontological precarity of body aesthetics.

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Abstract: *The arts and aesthetics are subject to different forms of precarity, namely professional and ontological, the latter relating to different forms of social pressure on creative expression. Based on this framework and considering body aesthetics as a global aesthetic and creative domain, this presentation aims to pinpoint, on the ground of relevant literature, emerging forms of ontological precarity that affect the aesthetics of the body, namely: social expectations, criticism, gatekeeping and social instrumentalization upon body aesthetics. The human body is an instance and a symbol of identity and interface with the social. The aesthetics of the body, biological or artistic, is an expression of personhood. Ontological precarity of body aesthetics is therefore a clear stage for the precarity of individuals.*

1-Expectations on Body Aesthetics

As artists are exposed to social expectations on style and content of their art, people in general are subject to social expectations about the physical appearance of the body and body adornment, with possible significant psychological consequences.

A basic expression of social expectation on body aesthetics is the one that involves the widespread expectancy (eventual resulting in obligation) that individuals prevent they social nudity. As first analyzed by Warren (1933), such expectancy derives from what he labels «the body taboo», considered as socially rooted in sexuality, but of weak consistency.

Another relevant expression of social expectation on body aesthetics relates with the fact that in many industrialized countries the social norm of the lean body can lead, in individuals with a chronic belief that they do not correspond to this norm, to the shame of the personal body, with possible negative effects on their mental health (Brewis & Bruening, 2018).

A further face of social expectation on body aesthetics occurs in the context of cultural imperialism, defined as the non-reciprocal influence of the culture of a more powerful civilization, country, or institution on a less powerful one (Boyd-Barrett, 2018). Cultural imperialism on body aesthetics can result in the erosion of local body aesthetic values, and the alienated interiorization of external ones. An example is the spread of western-style business suit, in alternative to native clothes. The equivalent is expressed in the Napolitan song *Tu Vuò Fà l'Americano (You Want to Play American)*, by Renato Carosone, 1956: “You wear trousers showing a famous brand/you wear an hat with the peak raised/you trotting along Tuleto's streets/showing off yourself, to make people look at you/You'd like to be an American,/'merican, 'merican/(...)”

2-Criticism on Body Aesthetics

As artists are exposed to potential destructive criticism regarding their art, people in general are also subject to eventual damaging comments on their body aesthetics.

This is where body-shaming behaviors fit, which involve critical and potentially humiliating comments about someone's body, especially about their weight or size (Kenny & Nichols, 2017), but also about other of their characteristics, such as those of shape, musculature, skin, hairiness, anatomy, and eventual modification or marking. As research has observed, suffering a ridicule of the body can lead, especially during adolescence, to shame of the personal body, with possible negative consequences in terms of mental health (e.g., Brewis & Bruening, 2018). Besides, some equivalent of body-shaming might probably generalize to cloth-shaming.

Besides being exposed to social criticism on body aesthetics, individuals can also exert self-criticism on the same body attributes, a fact that can result in psychological disturbance (e.g., Williams & Levinson, 2022).

3-Gatekeeping on Body Aesthetics

Criticism on art can lead, among other factors, to its social gatekeeping, which spreads from subtle to clear censorship. Equivalently, gatekeeping can extend to the aesthetic attributes of the body itself, which can be confronted with individuals' opposition, non-compliance and strategies aimed to preserve personal freedom (DaCosta, 2006).

A relevant instance of the ontological precariousness of body aesthetics is reflected in the censorship to which the artistic representation of the body, especially its nudity, is subject. For example, one of the most illustrative cases is that of the censorship exercised, throughout history, on the statue of David, by *Michelangelo Buonarroti*, 1501-4 and its representations: in 1504 the character's genitals were covered with a wreath of leaves and photographs from the mid-nineteenth century show, that by this time, the wreath had been replaced by a vine leaf (Paoletti, 2015). Although the cover was removed in the nineteenth century, in 2020 a replica of the statue, displayed in Dubai, was partially occluded, and in 2023 the principal of a school in the United States was forced to resign following a complaint about the exhibition of a reproduction of the work, in an art education class (Solomon, 2023). In this sense, as argued by Lucie-Smith (2007), some of the current *political correctness* discourse on the artistic representation of the body seems a euphemism for its censorship.

Furthermore, the social system can censor forms of body appearance. Sometimes this form of censorship is exerted by the state, along with the school and the family. For instance, a case that became known as *affaire du string*, involved the suspension, in some French schools, of students who dressed by exposing part of their underwear (Scott, 2007). More recently, as noted by Cooper (2021), access to certain places can be barred based on bodily appearance, emerging in the media news of individuals, perceived as "fat" or "old," who are barred from entering bars or clubs (e.g., Chiorando, 2022; Rosenblatt, 2022) or who therefore see their work admission or progression limited (Yu, 2022). Besides, in an empirical study (Oh et al., 2020) it was observed that people can categorize other people's social class based on their clothing and that people with more "rich" clothing are judged as more competent.

In other cases, the social system imposes certain body appearance, as the one resulting from the use of school and work uniforms or dress-codes, as depicted in *They are Happy*, Nikolai Belyaev, 1949, that depicts a group of Russian children in uniform. As some research demonstrates (e.g., Lim et al, 2021) such imposition can lead, in some cases, to body-shame, self-objectivation and powerlessness.

In addition, gatekeeping on body aesthetics can occur in the context of cultural absolutism - the position that holds (actively or passively) that a particular culture has a supreme value over the others (Howard, 1993). A frequent situation of cultural absolutism is the tendency to consider as abnormal or even inadequate aesthetic choices about clothing and body adornment that do not conform to those of the dominant cultural referent of the social context (Moule, 2012). In this sense, for example, as reported by Ely (2001, as cited by Moule, 2012), the use of a traditional African hairstyle by a student can be wrongly taken by a teacher as an affirmation of defiance and rebellion. A more recent example is related to the use of the veil (the *hijab*) by Muslim women, as observed by Scott (2007): if, in some cases, the *hijab* is imposed by the state or the family, against the possible desire of individuals (Syahrivar, 2021); in other cases, the *hijab* is forbidden by state institutions, alienating the personal expression of an aesthetic and identity choice of some of those women that insist in wearing it (Ruby, 2006).

Besides being exposed to social gatekeeping on body aesthetics, individuals can also exert self-imposed gatekeeping regarding their body. In this sense, the concept of aesthetic self-censorship may eventually be applied to (potentially harmful) behaviors of altering the normal appearance of the body, such as certain cases of: exaggerated food restriction and other ways of providing thinness, eventually derivable in *anorexia* (Treasure et al, 2015); plastic surgery, which can become addictive (Suissa, 2008); and excessive tanning, eventually derivable in *tanorexia* (i.e., additive tanning, usually by solariums) (e.g., Laporta-Herrero & Latorre-Forcén, 2020).

4-Instrumentalization of body aesthetics

As art and artists are instrumentalized, for religious, political or commercial reasons, body aesthetics can also be opportunistically used.

In a broad perspective, it can thus be considered the instrumentalization of which the body, especially the feminine, can be targeted, depending on its natural aesthetic attributes or that result from adornment. In this sense, a review of studies on the representation of women in the media (APA, 2007) revealed that, more often than men, women are represented as sexual and decorative objects, for example with provocative and revealing clothes of the body. Consequently, massive exposure to the media has the potential to develop in individuals a representation of women as sexual objects (APA, 2007).

Conclusion

Seen as a form of oppression, social pressures on and possible alienation of individuals' rights regarding their body aesthetics can be expected to have a negative impact in their health and well-being. Actually, studies in the psychology of oppression (e.g., David & Derthick, 2017) show that oppression in general naturally tends to act as a stressor with significant negative impact of that kind. Specifically, depending on the specific oppressive conditions, and specific psychological and group reactions to them, the experience of oppression can have a variety of effects, like low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, suicide, substance use, stress-connected heart disease, poor school/work performance, and low life satisfaction (David & Derthick, 2014, 2017).

Finally, a note is due on how to possible counter-act on the *ontological precarity* that affects the aesthetics of the body. Since it is impossible to reflect deeply on this aspect in this presentation, some exemplary ways in which art itself can function as a form of intervention in the problem at hand are offered. First, art can help to disclose and visualize the ontological precarity of body aesthetics. For instance, the movie *Piggy*, by Carlota Pereda, 2022, tells the story of an overweight teen bullied by a clique of cool girls while holidaying in her village.

Furthermore, art can help deconstruct social standards that ground social pressure on body aesthetics. For example, in the *Sketch Series*, «rEvolution» Agency, 2013, it is shown how a real (raw-boned) body would look if it would imitate the fashion's standard for a (lean) body. Art can also contribute to convey messages that are the opposite of the messages conveyed by social pressures on body aesthetics. For instance, in *Mona Lisa*, Crios Serrano, 2016, a poster for an Amnesty International campaign, Gioconda appears almost totally covered near the message: "A woman's body is a work of art. Over 100 women are killed every year for refusing to cover themselves".(1)

(1)For more examples, visit the section «Body Appearance/Adornment» of the website *Art for Human Rights* (<https://sites.google.com/view/artforhumanrights>)

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Precarity – far more and deeper than precariousness

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Peter Herrmann subsequently supplemented this contribution to the SUPI conference with a further in-depth essay entitled: “Precariat versus Precarious Societies**”. The essay is published in attachment no. 1 of this Report.*

According to *Friedrich Schiller*, the modern civilization based on the division of labor is the cause of the deformation of man. In fact, man has lost his reference to culture and has alienated himself from the state of nature, has lost its harmony and broken its integrity, thinking of finding perfection in the new living and working conditions. As a result, all men are lost. The essential characteristic in man's behavior is linked to the fact of following his instinct. *Marx* and *Engels* also criticize the divisive effect that the division of labor has on the personality of individuals and appeal to the need to rebuild all human beings. And just as Schiller, who describes how instinct drives individuals to act continuously to make the best use of their abilities and powers, so too Marx expresses himself in a similar way, no less than twice in his major work "Capital". , for example when he speaks of the free play of mental and physical forces.

This introduction allows me to have a different view and not talk about precariousness with reference to certain relationships between individuals or in terms of poverty. I think this is an important point: not to talk about or not to consider precariousness as a phenomenon that progressively moves to the center of society because it is society itself that is founded on precariousness. It is a situation that concerns the organization of power, of the economy and, I must say this in my position in a research institute such as the Center for Human Rights, also the system of rights. What we see in reality is that all relationships are in a certain sense turned upside down and that society itself is in a precarious situation, it has lost control over itself. Reconnecting to Schiller and Marx, but also to what emerged in the discussion of this international conference, it is clear that the division of labor has led to the dissolution of the totality, of entities, of units; but it is also a yardstick to understand that we are no longer even able to grasp what we are actually doing in terms of overthinking, in terms of recovery and reconversion to beauty. In this case we are not faced with the need to embellish evil, but to recover the sense of beauty of the whole. Quantum physics, for example, enables us to understand the beauty of nature, even with all its contradictions. Obviously, a recovery action of this kind means including in our logical and common sense system even what we are not able to recognize and see as beautiful in the first place. Only by taking a broader approach in our interpretations of reality and our ways of acting, this is the idea behind it, we may have the opportunity to promote real corrective action. By taking a holistic approach to the things we actually want to do, we could also correct the system of the division of labor itself, also acting in terms of the law.

In this regard, for example, what happened in the field of human and fundamental rights is recalled, for which the following process was followed: in fact, at the beginning, civil rights were affirmed and, subsequently, political rights and finally social rights.

I strongly believe that this is actually a misinterpretation of what happened: if we look at civil rights as they were originally defined or understood, what actually ended up driving and prevailing were the economic interests that were translated into system of rights: civil rights were actually also economic rights. It was not civil society or anything like that that promoted such a process. The real motivations are linked to economic interests; from here the initiatives extended to political rights,

leading to the organization of institutions that legislated for the affirmation of these rights; to then extend further to social rights, in terms of solidarity rights.

We have to interpret rights in terms of economic understanding, because that is the reality, and that means being economically active. Economy understood as the production and reproduction of everyday life, with reference to Engels. It is not about the production of goods, as it is currently understood, but about how everyday life is created and organized, in what form it actually takes place. This is something that includes political activities, but more importantly it concerns a broader assessment of economic sources and performance. And this is linked to what I said earlier about the precariousness of society: in a certain sense we have all lost this idea of totality. The founder of Amazon, *Jeff Bezos*, for example (who certainly does not suffer from poverty), can certainly try to control space, but he is not able to control what we call life and society, because what he would need to control society is the social; that is, a communicative action organized and promoted in order to be able to act with us and not against us.

What I see is that we have, individually, seemingly enormous power and that society has lost control of it, control in favor of certain types of economic performance, certain ways of producing and reproducing everyday life. What we see are rich people who have some powers, but not the power to control, for example, environmental issues. This is precariousness: individuals apparently have power, but they don't have the power to combine, to unite what is actually production referring not only to individual life but to the daily life of society.

With regard to the environment, for example, we have electric mobility systems, certainly better than what we have had in the past, but we don't have real public transport. With reference to human rights, we must understand them as rights of humanity, not as individual rights; that means we have to overcome nationalism, we have to overcome economic concentration. We must promote the social, in the sense that the social is non-precariousness; if we manage to achieve this goal, then we could say that we have really taken a big step forward.

QUESTIONS - ANSWERS

Question by Marco Ricceri

Taking as reference the presentation of prof. Duarte on the contribution of art as a key to understanding our society, and what was said earlier by prof. Norreklit, about the good life, there is in art, especially in the major arts, the idea of harmony. The beauty of the artwork is recognized when it reflects the idea of harmony: this idea of harmony was in the ancient Greek society, it was in the Renaissance period but now it is completely lost. Perhaps we can arrive at what you say by thinking about how to recover and apply this idea of harmony in society.

Answer by Peter Herrmann

Yes, this is important. I had the privilege of standing alone once in front of the painting *Guernica*, by *Picasso*. It is a pity that we know little about the background of this painting, yet it is beautiful. The representation of this violence is beautiful because it manages to overcome the object of the situation described - I am struck by it - and manages to say: "I can do something with this situation, I can overcome it". I think this is the specific beauty of what harmony is: to allow the negative to become positive, that is, to allow the viewer and experience of a work of art to overcome the object of the situation represented and become an active subject in able to modify it. Even in today's reality we are like victims, we are negatively affected by many external factors: but this is our time. People didn't want to confront this dramatic painting, so it was often moved from place to place. But this is the important point to reflect on: the ability to earn, to regain control of a situation that has gotten out of hand..

Comment by Lennart Nörreklit: I see that there are many common perspectives between what you said and what I said, but also some differences. One thing that worries me is the attention you have

drawn to the importance of the holistic approach: for the economy, law, etc. I fully agree that the concern must be to establish and promote the social, so to speak.

My suggestion is that the content of this action is not about money. Perhaps young people are concerned about this, not so much about having the chance to get whatever they want or to be free from any external control. I feel that we could achieve some results in promoting an adequate social status if we focus our attention on the concept of life we live. We are not just abstract social units that somehow have something to do in society: we are living beings and we need to understand what is good for life. And how can we create a good life for us and for everyone.

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On the relationship between education and precarity

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Introduction

The conference has addressed so far a conversation on skills, communication, and good life, among others, within a context of a widespread precarity. My contribution tackles these issues focused upon a very particular context, that conformed by schools, the school as an institution. School is the place to which we, in the western society and in the enlightenment societies, give the command to have an influence and educate our young generations.

Very briefly I want to mention a couple of issues why I consider that education is so fragile and precarious nowadays, and then what are the tensions that schools are suffering and that have them under siege, which are the pillars of education as we know it as we are entering in this 21st century in which we are facing this context of increasing precarization.

1-The pillars of education

The fragility of education is linked to the sources of the school, the foundations of national education systems, that go back to the 19th century: It is the Enlightenment which acknowledges the right to education, though this comes together with the rise of Nation State as well as at the time of the first industrial revolution. All three factors contributed to the provision and expansion of primary education to larger sections of the population. But it was not until the 20th century, after the Second World War, that the development of the right to education and the expansion of the welfare state in the western societies, contributed to the expansion and universalization (again, in Western societies) of secondary education, based upon the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and the consolidation of the Welfare State along the second half of the 20th century.

Can those sources still hold its legitimacy in the context we experience in the 21st century? If we consider the sources of legitimation of schooling, these are the following: the education of citizens, the assumption that socialization provides identity, so it's getting in communication with people different to you that contribute to develop your own identity, therefore not focusing on the personal but on the collective side. Of course, collective identity is also related to national identity: common language and shared history, as well as clear borders with neighbour countries.

School was also considered a sacred space, where teachers have a vocation and a call to deliver and take part in the transmission of knowledge as the cultural heritage of a society, under the belief that knowledge gives freedom to people. We also understand that making school attendance compulsory had to face the debate between the State and the families, who was entitled to safeguard the children and therefore who was entitled to take decisions on education; what knowledge to teach, what knowledge is considered valuable.

Looking at the French sociology of conventions, in the 20th century there has been a compromise in the expansion of the schooling between a civic approach (the right to education), the industrial approach (the need to develop everyone's capacities to be productive and competitive), and also a market orientation, given the interest in considering education rather a private/elitist than a public common good.

2-The world of school and the challenge of precariousness

Having set this framework, we can now first address the question whether education is causing or rather being affected by precarity; and second, how are the pillars of education been challenged by this.

If we look at the crisis of sources of education, that the French sociologist *Francois Dubet* has considered, we can start by considering mass education. Mass education has been redefined towards the end of the 20th century because it has been standardized, which was a requirement to become

massive and universal. This feature makes it almost impossible to serve the claim to individualize education, to pay attention to individual needs and diversity of different kinds: cultural diversity, sexual identity, language diversity and many more. The education structure is a standardizing, not individualizing one.

The second source of legitimation of schooling in the past was meritocracy, the belief that education could contribute to increase or improve the living conditions and social class of people properly educated. The American sociologist *Michael J. Sandel*, among others, has explained the abuse of the notion and the value of meritocracy, providing and analysing examples of higher education in the United States. But also there is a huge claim that access has been access granted to upper secondary and higher education, but access is no guarantee of success, not for many people, who are expelled from the system or come out from the system without achieving its goals, the acquisition of valuable knowledge. Teachers, furthermore, have been professionalized and this has contributed to a loss of their vocational identity, which is now referred to their specialization and segregated discipline rather than to the occupation they serve.

The worth of knowledge at school is also subject to changes. It used to be common culture, delivered to everyone to arrange a citizenship that was also linked to the development of the Nation State: common geography, common history, common language. Nowadays, with the increasing claim for diversity, that common feature of culture is fading away.

Learning is also considered as an acquisition: most European policies on education invite us to get out of teaching and to move into learning; changing the focus from the teaching to the learning side. It is as if the school as an institution was losing its place and it is the learner who comes to the centre, the learner as an individual, not as a member of the society. This is reinforced by discussions between motivation and engagement; the value attributed to more practical and useful knowledge, instead of academic knowledge; together with the expiration date of knowledge nowadays: under the frame of lifelong learning, what you know today will not be useful in the future.

If we then reconsider what is the right to education nowadays, and here again we have to refer to the United Nation's Declaration; is this right something that is enacted upon the individual or upon the society? Are we looking for ways to conduct people themselves, their own behaviours for the individual interest or for the collective common interest?

Another dimension is that of the delivery of education: teaching practice has become hybrid, not only because of the pandemic, but also because of the sources or platforms of information nowadays, that provide short term inputs. The need to learn has to be pacified whenever it comes but it lasts very short and the will to learn and curiosity as such have vanished from schools. What learners, children and youth and their families demand, is more "a la carte", in the sense that everyone can take and grab the knowledge he/she feels and I come to school and serve myself as if I was in a McDonald's and buy the knowledge that I want, not necessarily the shared knowledge that has been agreed as the cultural heritage of a society and its common values.

Schooling is built around the organization of time and space, and around common standards to provide this massified education, but now there is an increasing offer of extracurricular choice, and this proves more interesting for wealthy families than what school has to offer. As a result of this, school is losing its space and its time as well.

3-How to improve education? Some open questions

Should we improve education nowadays? If I may use also the notion developed by *Harmut Rosa*, a German philosopher: "is education, is the school, a space for resonance where people can find its place and find the place of personal and social restoration, identification with the collective, or there is not this place anymore?" (H.Rosa: *The Resonance Pedagogy*, 2020). If we consider the aims of education, it seems that custody what is gaining place and custody is of course related to control and therefore to power.

But there is also, after the pandemic, an increasing demand for school taking care of the emotional development of young people and of course of resolving social problems: we demand school to provide remedies for social needs that we cause: the school as a place to prevent people

from smoking, to raise sustainability awareness, to be kind drives or whatever other need or urge a society may feel: education is always the answer, whatever the question. Of course the large issues like environmental crisis, migrations, work crisis are not dealt in school, though this seems something aside from that.

QUESTION - ANSWER

Question by Halima Ozimova: I liked the presentation by prof. Marhuenda Fluixà very much. It seems very clear that you are an active teacher. What do you think about private universities? Here in Uzbekistan we have about 50 private universities, mostly from Japan, South Korea, Germany.

Answer by Fernando Marhuenda Fluixà

In Spain private universities are academies that provide an extension of secondary education for wealthy people and families and they facilitate the entry to working life. And for teachers, professors, lectures private universities are serving as a platform in the meantime as they can have access to public universities, so people who are educated in public universities who go lecturing in private universities, they try to come back to public universities because academic freedom and working conditions are better.

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Precarization of power

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Introduction

A very brief introductory reflection. In my opinion, the evolution of the general situation that we have witnessed in recent years is much more dramatic than the one they faced when we attended the previous conferences of the European SUPI Network. In the last conference on precariousness in 2022, for example, many of us were more engaged in identifying the conditions of precariousness of certain social groups, and so on. Currently, however, we are facing a process that concerns the whole of society as a whole.

The title I suggest for my speech is the following: the "*Precariousization of power*". With this I propose to rather go and examine the other side of the social hierarchy and see if the precarisation of society can be attributed to the highest level because, clearly, if it were, it could explain many of the dramatic, unpredictable and terrible consequences that burden our communities. Indeed, there is no doubt that these consequences are much more dramatic for everyone when power is precarious compared to the precarious situation experienced by individuals or social groups. This is why I propose to address this issue which concerns the conditions of the top management of society, even if my main objective is, in general, to deepen the concept of precarization as such.

2-Precariousness at the top of the social hierarchy

In this regard, first of all, one could ask whether it is not a contradiction to speak of precariousness of power, since power by definition cannot be impotent and consequently cannot be linked to a situation of precariousness. If this is the case, in fact it makes no sense to speak of precariousness of power: the people in power would, by definition, be those who are not in a precarious situation.

However, I think that for some uses of the concept of casualization we can refer to the system of power and consider the distribution of power as a relational concept in society; this regards the fact that some people, in their relationship with others, have the power to control and influence their behaviour, while other people have less power to exercise these functions of control and influence. In this case, however, we are dealing with a relational concept. Precariousness, on the other hand, generally refers to a different concept that concerns the ability and possibility of an individual or a social group to exercise the power to do things, to be able to create the things with which you want to solve problems, i.e. to say what is good, what is good to do. In fact, many people enter a precarious situation when they recognize that they "can't do what they want", that trying and trying again doesn't help solve problems, if they don't receive support or help from the outside.

I think, therefore, that these two concepts can be used in a slightly different way even if this might seem like a contradiction. But when I evaluate the behavior, so to speak, of many leaders in our societies there is a clear feeling that they do not really understand themselves, what they are doing. There is at least the impression that they are acting not so much from the side of concern for the obvious task of helping the population to create a good life but rather from the side of the influences they intend and want to exercise. And this would suggest, therefore, that many leaders in our societies are not acting solely on what is their cognition and personal judgment of what is good, but that they are acting primarily on their ability to influence others. Hence their condition of precariousness, interpreted with reference to the first relational concept exposed above. Perhaps they are also deceived into believing what should be considered good: and it is here that what we can define as the precariousness of the people in power emerges in dramatic terms.

So it makes a lot of sense to consider at least these two concepts as different from each other and to take them as a reference for interpretative analyses. Furthermore, in relation to them, we have to be very concerned about the type of power structure and capacity that we have formed and educated

in societies, where all this will lead us, what kind of world we will end up in. Perhaps we have all entered a situation of general precariousness.

3-Getting out of precariousness: the goal of a good life

With this formulation I would think that the precariousness of power is not just being precarious in the sense of not being able to do anything. A precarious person may be able to move and do things and still be in a precarious situation: so what can't he do? There can be many descriptions of what they can't do and I think the general description would be that the person can't find ways to create a good life. This is the general term to refer to: I would like to say that it is a human effort, we are living beings and the general effort is to create a good life. Some might doubt that this is a correct description of the general effort, but I think it makes sense to regard this as a sensible way of interpreting reality; after all, I repeat, we are living beings and therefore we want life to be good. We are not necessarily selfish beings: generally we would like life to be good also for our fellow humans and for all living creatures in the world.

This is general guidance. One might then ask "is this really the ambition of the people in power?" Maybe it's not really their ambition, maybe they have other ambitions, maybe they think it's very good to have different and original options, whether it's good, for example, to destroy nature to produce an immediate profit or something else. And this is an ongoing debate of great importance: how to deal with that destructive element of our behavior since we have been ruthless in destroying the world of life around us for quite some time, a behavior which we are beginning to understand. feel the consequences on our health and our general living conditions. And why did we do it? Why didn't we use normal common sense? Why weren't we more conscious? Perhaps the goal of the people in power is different; perhaps it is exercising control and the logic that drives those behaviors is simply having the power, thus an alternative to that geared towards promoting a good life. But then, on the other hand, how could we understand why they want power? Perhaps because they think it is functional in creating a good life for them. With that we come back to the same critical reasoning, so to speak, that people do things because they think they are good, that is the underlying reason.

With this it emerges that some people think it is good to have power, and some even think that it is good to do bad things, that it is good to create destruction. After all, it is an old dialectical lesson that destruction is useful for creating something new; there are numerous historical precedents in this respect. And even if we could say that sometimes this can be appropriate - destroying to build something new - we should still add that it is necessary to do it because only in this way can we build something new and better. In any case, the motivation of the goal of a good life is always present.

Abandoning this motivation implies that we should make people and power itself completely irrational and simply act without concern for the prefrontal cortex of our brain, so to speak, to which the organization of the reflexive input of our human behavior is connected. And this is a really stupid situation to keep in mind anyway: when the power decides not to use its prefrontal cortex. In this regard, it is also generally recalled that reality nevertheless presents many elements of a social or scientific nature which indicate that all human beings are irrational or do not make full and best use of the resources at their disposal, with the consequence that they live at least partially in a precarious situation that would be useful for creating dynamics in society and things like that. Even in this case, however, all this would be useful and support the pursuit of the above-mentioned objective of creating a good life.

We need to examine this line of thought. In the history of ideas, in philosophy we would say that the concept of goodness plays the main role: in fact, we have two fundamental concepts of reference: goodness and life. But in the history of our philosophy it was mainly only the concept of the good that was the object of our insights, connected to a utilitarian interpretation in existence. It is an open problem that we cannot solve: in fact, there is no adequate demonstration of what good is, its definition is still an open question. For this reason, the social sciences, like any kind of science, are required not to operate according to a system of values, including the reference to the concept of the good, but to limit themselves to the evaluation of the factors that affect the phenomena. If it is true that modern science was born, so to speak, with the Enlightenment, then we have a further problem

in going beyond the area of the aforementioned factors. There have, to be sure, been some abstract attempts such as the utilitarian calculations of Jeremy Bentham and Stuart Mill to define modern types of utilitarianism; but this was then substantially translated into the concepts relating to the analysis of the benefits produced in the economic structures with which individuals worked.

Ours, however, wants to be a different indication, connected to the concept of life: because, ultimately, there is not only the concept of good in itself, but the idea of a good connected to life, to the idea of what it is to live well. Perhaps by pausing to reflect on what it means to live, to live well, we could communicate something valid to each other. Perhaps we live in a world of forgetting the values of life that blinds us to the importance of a good life. As far as life is concerned, it seems that we are all in a bit of a strange situation. We notice that in many situations people everywhere are subjected to heavy stress conditions; that the whole society is under a high level of stress: it does, no doubt, good things, but at the same time it also does enormously bad things, for example by destroying our living conditions very actively, by continuously creating new problems in that sense. The result is that we have no respect for the efforts to clarify this concept: what it means to live. Yet we all have an idea of what a good life is, we care, for example, about children, animals, plants: we know that they must grow well, be full of energy, shining, full of ideas and vitality; all of this is very obvious. And the empirical sciences help us understand how all these beings develop.

In essence, we have the possibility of having cognitive elements drawn from basic empirical observations on what a good life is that we can apply directly to the situation that has been created in society for the whole of people. And here it is highlighted that people are generally treated in a very bad way; stressful situations are continuously created, spread across all social groups. Even though we've reached our highest level of productivity ever, people have to work like crazy. Indeed, the economic organization of our society is not oriented towards worrying that people progress and feel good; it is no coincidence that a large part of their life and time is spent in the workplace. Sometimes there is a very harsh treatment of people, there is a lack of profound respect for them. The system doesn't recognize that people are able to do many things with their independent mind, they want to do many good things to contribute to a good life and a good society. But that's not exactly what we see. Rather, what we see is the exercise of a lot of control, a lot of espionage and a lot of manipulation of people. As a result I think there is a need for a guideline to be followed to empower people in the possibility of creating a good life; and this is the task of our people in power in a democratic society which we hope we have organized so that we can maintain this kind of leadership. But it doesn't seem like it's a widespread situation that applies to everyone.

For my part, I would like to deepen the analyzes to have a more precise understanding of what people need to avoid being in a precarious situation, in which they are powerless and subject to manipulation. So: what is it not to be in a precarious situation? What is its opposite? Does it precisely mean being able to create a good life and work for it? Of course, a lot can depend on the most diverse circumstances, on what we are able to do ourselves; but there is no doubt that society should also support every effort and create the conditions that would allow people to create a good life for themselves and for each other. Obviously there are objective conditions for this type of commitment, relating, for example, to the availability of the resources necessary to face such a challenge.

In society, a lot could be achieved with a basic income to be guaranteed to all. With the availability of this type of resource, people could be put in a position to be able to organize and live a good life. And this would have many widespread positive effects: in fact, not only would those who are unemployed and have no money for their livelihood be helped to emerge from precariousness, but it would also eliminate many effects relating to self-precariousness that affects people who are so afraid of find themselves in the same situation as the unemployed and who consequently agree to obey the commands of the higher power structure of the communities. To avoid being expelled and marginalized, they end up agreeing to live in what can be defined as a society of fear, which in my opinion is increasingly widespread. Because of this realist mechanism, many people give up pursuing the goal of a good life, including the unemployed faced with the possibility of organizing their own independent work, and prefer to follow the command of some leadership, even if they fail to understand its real intentions. Many people, for example, don't even have a clear idea of the

knowledge and skills that are necessary to create the conditions necessary to organize a good life. All of this is happening today even though in the last twenty years we have witnessed many changes, positive and negative, in social behaviour, to the point of acquiring an element of certainty: that for the promotion of a good life there is something more fundamental than the financial resources: i.e. communication resources.

4-Pecarity and the value of communication and dialogue between people

For the precarious person the problem is that although she has the ability to communicate, he doesn't have the ability to communicate in a way to be part of a unit or group that manages this resource; she just gets kicked out, so to speak. Your communication about you does not count for the unity of control of these kind of resources that we have in society. And this incapacity to create such communication and, consequently, to build an adequate system of relationships is the fundamental basis of precariousness and makes it impossible to overcome it. Let us therefore examine the theme of casualization as a matter of communication.

I think there are four types of conditions that must be met simultaneously for people to be able to act in a way that positively solves their problems. The first condition concerns the fact that people need to have a clear idea of their real situation and this in order not to live and relate to a fictitious world. The second condition is related to the need to know what values they should pursue, therefore what a good life is. If people do not understand what a good life is, and have for a long time only an abstract and vague idea of it, up to a total forgetfulness of the real meaning of life, it is not surprising that they end up accepting it as normal stress and all the negative situations that take away from a good life. The third condition is that people have an idea or some good knowledge of their actual possibilities to operate. The existence or otherwise of these possibilities can be determined with correlative analyzes of a statistical or other type, with all the limitations that this type of analysis entails. It is in fact the task of the individual to verify and control whether or not his activities lead to the promotion of a good life. In reality even when these possibilities exist, some are able to work for a good life, while others fail. The fourth condition is given by the integration of these three conditions. This integration provides the elements, in terms of possibilities and values, to understand that behind the possible failure to achieve the goal of a good life, what really emerges is a situation of precariousness.

We are in a precarious situation if we fail to see any possibility of achieving the aforementioned goal, if we fail to see what the world is like, if we live in a kind of illusory imagination of reality that is continuously bombarded in our heads from the most diverse sources. This is the state of precariousness in which a single individual, or an organization, or an entire society can find itself. To get out of such a precarious situation, interaction with people is needed, communicative data is needed. But to understand how the aforementioned three conditions integrate and operate with each other, communication must be aimed at helping us to discover what the world is like, what is possible, what is of value. For this reason, communication must be functional to a process of cooperation between people, in which everyone continuously adapts his or her behavior to that of the others. This is a fundamental aspect of life. Life works like this: it is actually based on a communication that has the function of promoting dialogue, a continuous dialogue between people who then cooperate with each other; they discover what each of them is doing, they understand each other; this creates complementarity in the activities, ends up producing positive initiatives, allows for the identification of solutions that are considered good.

From my point of view, the basic element in the question of precariousness is living in a world where dialogue is not possible, living in a situation conditioned by the fact that there is only one information structure or where you are excluded from those who dialogue with themselves and with others. So the very nature of communication, when it creates the social, is to promote dialogue. Communication can be functional to strengthen the state, to create power, of course: but in this case it is not social communication. It is here that the problem of precarization clearly emerges. Faced with this problem, in order to help find possible remedies, our communication training and the communication systems we normally use are fundamental. They help us understand when people are lost in the sense that they have no dialogue, or when they are, as it were, standing against someone else: a person is talking to you or you are talking to others, but there is no dialogue, a community is

not built, it is not something social. Perhaps these people who communicate are conditioned by a strong power system, they may be conditioned by fear and other not so good, positive social reasons. In my opinion, understanding these situations is essential. Recognizing dialogue as a fundamental element, we can see that social activities are the result of a sort of co-authorship, where people together create the process and the narrative of what they live, create a situation that is not simply the result of action of a command structure which aligns people's lives on their own orientations without them being able to have any say in the matter.

These four conditions all have a relational value: knowledge of facts is the relationship between people and the world. To analyze it, evaluate it and understand it, it is fundamentally necessary to resort to the application of an empiricist methodology of observation. We are dealing with rational subjects and it is essential to understand what kind of personal relationship they have built with the world. It is within this framework that the analysis of the possibilities that each subject has to construct his system of relationships in the best possible way must be placed; of course these possibilities are not directly visible, so how can we analyze them? And how can we organize this part of science aimed at such an analysis? People need it if we want to produce knowledge for them that can help them not just be victims of the impositions of external subjects. People should not be precarious: they need the possibility to act like living beings, they must be respected as beings who have a brain oriented by the will to do something good, to contribute to the development of society.

There is therefore a need to introduce many elements of reflection within this conceptual framework: we must develop interpretative models of relational structures, define the facts that are the object of our observations, bearing in mind that our perceptions of reality can be limited, can mislead us, because what we are examining are the function and potential of situations; in fact, it is these last two elements that indicate to us what the actual reality experienced by people in society is.

In this regard, it should be added that if we fail to highlight this set of functions and potentials, of the possibility of promoting a good life on the part of people, if we fail to interpret it correctly, we could also cause dangerous negative effects. We need to carefully consider the limits of our cognitive ability. This applies to the analysis and evaluation of all social phenomena. It is no coincidence that we are often very surprised by the emergence of social phenomena that present something totally different from what we expected; we did not see the existence of these possibilities that suddenly exploded over our heads. For this reason we must define and deepen our type of analysis well. In fact, studying the possibilities means moving from the logical to the factual, making descriptions based on the concept of the functioning and development of a phenomenon, organizing a logical model as a basic reference for the interpretation of social changes. Concepts and logical interpretative models are, therefore, the two main tools of our way of proceeding. An example that illustrates the value of the above elements: how many people have been killed by the police because they believed that the toy gun was a real gun? To understand this phenomenon we need to start from the description of the functionality of a real pistol which is not always evident. In this ability to deceive lies the real distinction between the different, true or false, possibilities of this tool.

If we want to help people get out of precariousness we have to help them, also by organizing training sessions, focusing on this side of the problem and developing our understanding of the possibilities to the fullest; and for this we must first clarify and understand what a good life is.

Concluding reflections

In conclusion, I present the following reflections.

a-The collapse of the liberal globalist perspective and armed conflicts

In Europe and the world in general we are witnessing a veritable explosion of unforeseen events. For example, the new liberal globalist perspective is being challenged somehow very dramatically and suddenly, as if out of nowhere; the wisdom of a generation that the global economy is a factor in prosperity has been swept away for various reasons. At first we thought it was Trump's crazy idea, but there's actually more to it than that. And all our politicians are involved in it. Why? Why, I add, should we prefer conflicts? Why should we destroy or reduce our ability to face life's challenges by creating dramatic conflicts? I'm not sure what is the real explanation of the reasons behind these

happenings. The explanation that comes to mind is the following: if there is not enough war then military industrial capital makes no income, consequently it exerts a huge influence in creating this kind of conflict. And we can see that continuously, since the outbreak of peace in the aftermath of World War II, many efforts have been made to create a vision that legitimizes, as it were, the initiation of bombing and destruction of one country after another. , the latest being Afghanistan which has been bombed for twenty years. And finally, with this kind of engagement and influence they managed to propel Russia and Putin into a war as well which somehow - this is my interpretation - as we know from published interviews over many, many years, was regarded as a possible hypothesis.

b-hypothesis for a new development model

If we consider what many think about this movement which is making efforts in secret to organize the new world government, so to speak, we notice that the main views that emerge are startling. In fact, further elements have been added to the traditional vision, which is above all that of the large economic and financial players. Thus the horizon of this vision is no longer limited only to the role that the classic economic stakeholder can play, but is extended to a wider system of power to the point of involving all parties interested in promoting a new development model. For example, workers should be given good treatment; to the institutions that should actively participate in the new governance system. The concrete implementation of this new vision, which emerges from the political and business leaders meeting in Davos, should not be so problematic; it could look quite promising if there really is a will to take care of the planet, its ecological condition, and all people.

In reality, with respect to this vision, the kind of concrete policies that we see implemented in our systems is highly inconsistent; however it is also disputed by many. It has sometimes been defined as corporatism with reference to the fascist-type relationship that existed between the state and the large companies that favored them. In this case, however, the type of corporatism referred to when speaking of Davos is characterized by the fact that the state is in practice in a subordinate position to capital, which first determines what to do and then manipulates governments to operate in the indicated direction. Generally, when we see the behavior of politicians, it's not hard to imagine that something like this is happening. Obviously this does not emerge in the official documents. Perhaps there is something deceptive in that vision of the new world government described above. What I register is the fact that there are many discussions and criticisms of this proposal. One may wonder what it really is, what it could represent in the face of current concrete policies, the absurd situations that we register, for example, in a state like Germany with this totally incomprehensible political coalition involving a party like the Greens.

c- the role of researchers and the phenomenon of widespread casualization

I think we need to reflect a lot: we are researchers and I can imagine that only a researcher can produce useful knowledge to get out of this widespread and structural insecurity. No one else could do it. On the other hand, we must consider that a large part of the training of people involved in political leadership comes from universities and other specialized centres; that is, in essence it is a training on how to control people, how to organize manipulation, that sort of thing. This happens in this society which is essentially false, which spreads narratives and creates a propaganda atmosphere, a totally anti-democratic society, far from any appeal to human reason, disrespectful of the truth. We have clearly come to a situation where, for example, many universities have come under the rule of the capital, so to speak: the university should be governed by the truth, but the truth must not be governed by the capital. This is really bad for the truth, because it means that many types of research activities are simply designed to support some particular interest of capital as opposed to the democratic interest of promoting the possibility of people to get out of precariousness. By strengthening the tools of manipulation, the tools that create precariousness are strengthened.

d-the value of life and the risk of becoming mentally precarious

How to get out of such a situation seems to be not so easy. I think the central thing is to have a better understanding of what people need to be active actors also towards political leaders, so that the latter too are able to do something they can respect in themselves and that they can trust , and not just follow the example of some manipulators. I think these are the main messages to follow; they are the ones I feel worried about. I feel I have a responsibility to come to my senses and I feel the green movement

is pretty strong because it focuses on the value of life. We like life. And if we don't like life, something is wrong; it means that we too have become mentally precarious.

QUESTIONS - ANSWERS

Question

I think perhaps one of the answers is the following: do we really have to look at our economic systems, as you said, or is everything based on utilitarian calculus, which in a sense is easy because it also ends up measuring everything that cannot be quantified. But now the task that awaits us is to move towards an ethics that is not easy to determine and quantify. It is for this reason that even our sciences are not ready to face it. Do you have any further observations or comments on how we can improve our epistemology in this direction?

Answer by Lennart Nörreklit

In the utilitarian calculation, which is somehow implicitly behind many reasoning or even qualified comments in progress, reference was made to the concept of happiness: for Jeremy Bentham the dichotomy of pleasure and pain was valid, but it was certainly not a sufficient reference. Stuart Mill took up the traditional classical concept of happiness. Basically, both wanted to define a calculation method that referred to a set of scientifically identified actions and that allowed to deduce which type of activity was capable of creating the greatest possible happiness. This is a contradiction in the sense that on the one hand it has been stated that everyone is responsible for their own happiness; that it is the invisible hand that controls the economy and this would be the sign that everyone is looking for their own happiness. On the other hand we have calculus: we calculate whatever we have to do, so we have to do what the calculus says. These two things are totally different. At present we have very valuable support from important studies by sociologists on the level of happiness in a country: and this shows that we can really measure it. But this aspect can be debated: one might wonder how the level of happiness is calculated. Denmark, for example, is estimated as the happiest country in Europe but people are stressed, there are people unemployed and many other problems.

What questions do we ask people to measure happiness? Even people who are not well will answer that they are well: if they answer that they are not well, some might think that they are uneducated people. When people claim to be satisfied you might suspect, for example, that depressed people have a tendency to tell you that they are fine and feeling good, because they are very sensitive to telling the truth about their real situation. All this to say that a type of survey is often promoted which is misleading and invalid. What I want to underline is that the reality we can observe can often deceive us, especially when we observe the state of progress of people. When we go directly to the workplace we immediately experience certain sensations; we can feel the atmosphere in that place, see the expressions on people's faces. These are also important elements to keep in mind. It's not impossible, but it's hard to understand people's feelings by presenting them with questionnaires or anything else because people don't have the courage to tell the truth.

There is another structural element that follows this and concerns the quantitative perspective. The economy is built on scale; it is an economy that we could also define as one of substitutability which is absolutely contrary to promoting systems of good relationships and creating dialogues in which people can truly mirror each other. Managers want to be able to substitute people when they don't like them, have the assurance that all sorts of things are substitutable, and therefore not have long-term positions, and so on. And when people are replaceable, that means they cannot refer to intrinsic values in that system. This is a horrible thing. The selection processes we favor, such as leadership selection, are a terrible thing when they are detached from shared values of reference. This is an important challenge: we must face it. I think that many leaders, who operate in different fields of activity, can also understand it and may want to contribute to creating better situations of shared progress.

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Social Precarity and Sustainability Processes: the open problem of the Social Taxonomy

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Introduction

The theme of this contribution focuses on a key element of sustainable development. It is linked to the way in which States are currently proceeding in the three dimensions of development - economic, environmental and social - identified by the United Nations 2030 Agenda and agreed within the framework of the most important international institution; which general and specific objectives they pursue, which policies they implement, which indicators and criteria they apply to monitor and evaluate the results achieved. Specifically, the reference is to the so-called taxonomies, i.e. the regulatory system that has been defined and is currently applied in the three main areas of intervention of sustainable development.

The experience of the EU in this regard is important due to the coherence, complexity and multiplicity of its initiatives: but it has brought to light a problem, still open, which is fundamental for the objective of the quality of development: how to define the social, the cohesion, the social promotion of individuals and communities. These are all essential aspects for addressing and correcting the phenomenon of precariousness that characterizes our communities in an ever more intense and widespread way. The open question in the EU experience also objectively challenges the ability of the international scientific community to find adequate answers, and not just the operators, whether they are responsible for political decisions or the actors of civil society organizations.

1-Useful introduction points

In order to fully understand the nature of the problem that has emerged within the EU, it is appropriate, in my opinion, to clarify the following preliminary points.

Premise - A

The first concerns the fact that we are living in a time of great contradictions, characterized by growing tensions, conflicts, wars, protectionism, closures and so on. But on the other hand, all states are working hard to build a different development model oriented towards the objective of its sustainability. For example, all states have repeatedly approved and confirmed the value of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, all states have sent their "national plans" to the United Nations for official evaluation and review, carried out within the framework of the *High Level Political Forum* (VNRs plans: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs>). In essence, the commitments carried forward for sustainable development, in which the social dimension plays a fundamental role, are the common platform that all states maintain even in a situation of growing tensions and ruptures. As a scientific community, making a contribution of ideas and proposals in this direction means strengthening cooperation between states in a period of great difficulty in their system of relations.

Premise - B

Promoting a comparison and an in-depth comparison between the national plans for sustainable development sent by the States for review by the United Nations is a very useful exercise, at least to clarify and evaluate what is the political and cultural background, the system of values and interests, to which they refer with their initiatives in the three dimensions indicated, in particular the social dimension of development. For example, a reading of the national plans drawn up and implemented by China, India, the EU or African states, brings out very different visions and orientations. The transition to a model based on the quality of development, in which the international community is currently engaged, necessarily requires a great deal of verification and deepening of the system of values to which the States refer, as an idea of human and civil progress they intend to pursue or, better, they are pursuing. This is all the more important the more the global community presents itself

as an interconnected reality; the more the whole community is faced with common challenges of structural changes (environment, demography, etc.).

Premise - C

In the EU system, social policy has for decades had a secondary position, as a support, to the primary needs of economic policy and the construction of a single European market. Only with the Treaty of Lisbon of 2007, the one still in force, was the value of the so-called "social clause" affirmed with the declaration that the development model to be built in the European system is that of "a highly competitive social market economy aiming at full employment and social progress" (TEU, art.3). In the following years, the primary relevance of social policy for community development was formally recognized in 2017, with the approval of the European Pillar of Social Rights, a sort of constitutional charter approved by the highest European authorities and by the Member States ("progress economic and social are intertwined". ", thus point n.11, page 7, of the Pillar)., included in the strategy for sustainable development launched in 2019, the Green Deal, confirmed in the tripartite summit of 2020 and in the subsequent summit of Porto in 2021, both participated by the recognized protagonists of the so-called Social Dialogue.

2-European taxonomies of sustainable activities

Since the launch of the European Green Deal, in 2019, the EU authorities have proceeded with great intensity of action in translating the strategy for sustainable development into policies, plans, measures, new regulations that intervene in an ever-incisive way in the most diverse areas of life community. In practice, in recent years, the EU has designed, and continues to define, a new framework of conditionality/opportunities that concerns the plans and programs of all public and private operators, at every level, national and local, and in every sectoral context and territorial; a reference framework, often of a prescriptive nature, which provides precise path indications, establishes obligations and constraints to be respected, indicates targets to be achieved, result measures and time limits to be respected, with a profound impact of change on the entire production system European.

A fundamental operational tool of this change strategy, which allows the choices and action plans of public and private operators to be guided in well-defined directions, consists of the so-called taxonomies - the taxonomy for sustainable activities, commonly referred to as the green taxonomy, and the social taxonomy – which the Commission has approved and is applying to promote sustainable development.

As far as the green taxonomy is concerned, the main reference document is EU Regulation 2020/852 on the "EU Taxonomy of Sustainable activities" approved in 2020. With this act, the Commission introduced a classification mechanism for activities that can be considered more or less sustainable based on their degree of alignment with the environmental objectives of the European Union and their compliance with certain clauses of a social nature. This mechanism is essentially a guide with a binding nature for three main subjects - companies, investors, public institutions - which are thus induced to improve their own ecological transition policies and plans.

3- The scientific basis for social taxonomy: a serious open problem

Different and more complex is the case of social taxonomy. The still open point of discussion on which the definition of the social taxonomy is centered concerns the scientific references of the new instrument, i.e. how the social dimension of sustainable development must be understood and declined. If the green taxonomy, this is the main thesis being debated within the EU, can refer to precise quantitative parameters indicated by science, such as the reduction of CO2 emissions to improve climatic conditions, in the case of the social taxonomy the situation is different because the reference is instead mainly to indications and elements mainly of a qualitative nature. The basic questions concern, for example, which and how to define the indicators and standards relating to people's rights, to the processes of inclusion in the world of work and in community life, to people's quality of life, to the enhancement of assistance services , to the social cohesion of a system. It is clear that in order to obtain plausible answers, the definition of the social dimension of development

and, consequently, of the relative taxonomy requires the contribution of both quantitative and qualitative elements of calculation and evaluation. Here lies a greater difficulty to overcome.

The *Platform on Sustainable Finance Report*. Final Report on Social Taxonomy published in February 2022 and elaborated after extensive consultation with the main development actors by the special interdisciplinary group of experts established by the European Commission in 2020 presents the main shared fixed points on which to build the framework of social taxonomy: " a social taxonomy is the point of premise - it should follow the steps of environmental taxonomy: (i) first setting social goals; (ii) then outlining the substantial contributions that can achieve those goals; and finally (iii) develop criteria that apply the principle of not causing any significant harm, so that contributing to the achievement of an objective is not detrimental to others. Ultimately, the need for minimal environmental safeguards will have to be considered, depending on whether the social and environmental taxonomies will be combined or remain separate. (E.Commission Report, pg.29).

The Report therefore identifies the principles and standards on which the European social taxonomy must be based, which are contained in the documents and conventions approved by the main international institutions and currently in force. namely: *International Bill of Human Rights* (1966) (composed of "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" UDHR, 1948; "UN Covenants on Civil and Political Rights", ICCPR, 1966; and the "Economic, Social and Cultural Rights", ICESCR, 1966); the *Declaration on Fundamental Rights and Principles at Work* of the International Labor Organization – ILO (1998, amended in 2022); the *Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy* (MNE, 1977 of the ILO, amended in 2022); the *UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights-UNGPs* (2011); the *UN Global Compact Strategy 2021–2023* (2021); the *OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises-MNEs* (2011). With regard to the European system, the following documents are taken as reference: the *European Convention on Human Rights* (1950, amended in 2021), the *European Social Charter* (1961) of the Council of Europe, updated in 1995, the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union* (2000, amended in 2012), the *European Pillar of Social Rights EPSR* (2017).

According to the report, all of these documents "cover a broad range of social topics that can be included within the scope of the social taxonomy, including: labor rights, social protection and inclusion, non-discrimination, the right to healthcare, housing, education (including vocational training) and nutrition, assistance in the event of unemployment or self-employment, consumer protection, peaceful and inclusive societies, the fight against corruption and tax evasion". (Ibidem, pg. 32). A further indication concerns the identification of social groups and specific objectives to be pursued with the tool of social taxonomy. The groups on which the complex scheme of the social taxonomy focuses are: a) workers, b) consumers and c) the civil community. In relation to these groups, three main objectives to be pursued and the relative standards and indicators to be applied are defined: a) decent work, b) Adequate living standards and wellbeing for end-users users), c) Inclusive and sustainable communities and societies.

With the European social taxonomy, therefore, a scenario of new tasks and functions opens up for the main public and private entities operating in the social and labor fields; a scenario all the more challenging the more the social taxonomy refers, as has been said, to largely qualitative indicators and standards that require in-depth knowledge of the basic principles of reference and the translation of these principles into coherent proposals formulated according to an adequate reading and interpretation of the processes taking place in society.

On this problem, the aforementioned report presents a fundamental objection which objectively creates a situation of great uncertainty in the EU on the whole of the interventions to be promoted in support of social promotion.

As mentioned above, the point at issue is the diversity of scientific foundations between environmental taxonomy and social taxonomy. Indeed, according to the report,

"the foundations of the environmental taxonomy are natural science and international frameworks such as the Paris Agreement. Criteria for the environmental taxonomy were generally developed on the basis of scientifically validated research results. A social

taxonomy, however, cannot be based on science in the same way. While the science behind climate change gives clear answers on CO² reduction requirements, science is not systematically able to play such a role for social factors. And although there is abundant research on social phenomena within social sciences that can influence the development of a social taxonomy, science cannot play the same role here as it does in the environmental taxonomy... Finally, it might be more difficult – at least initially – to develop quantifiable criteria for a social taxonomy than for an environmental taxonomy. This is because, for environmental topics (and climate-change mitigation in particular), scientific research makes it possible to attach highly relevant quantitative criteria to economic activities. However, social sustainability is at the moment often described in more qualitative terms”. (Ibidem, pg. 30).

In practice, with this objection on the weak role of science in the definition of social taxonomy, the whole framework of social policies is left in uncertainty, lacking the possibility of referring to valid and shared indicators; with a very significant prejudice to the effectiveness and uniformity of European and national social policies. The uncertainty, maintained and accepted by the community authorities on the terms of reference of the social taxonomy, currently presents the real risk of jeopardizing the social cohesion initiatives of the entire system and the effectiveness of the same strategies for sustainable development which have in the social dimension of growth is one of the fundamental cornerstones

Conclusion

We are therefore faced with a decisive question which concerns the entire scientific community in particular and essential aspects regarding the interventions to be promoted in order to be able to correct social precariousness. In this case, I think that also as a SUPI network we should promote a great commitment to find adequate answers to these open questions, expanding the comparison as much as possible at a global level: the evaluation of development quality plans and of the applied regulation systems not only within the EU but also from other non-EU states, it offers a great opportunity precisely to improve and contribute to the global scientific community for a desired common and shared progress.

QUESTIONS - ANSWERS

Question by Prof. Alexander Razumov

Dear Colleagues, Thank you for inviting me to participate in this event. This meeting is extremely important to better understand the situation in national labor markets and national social protection systems across Europe. My question is the following: what are the differences between social precariousness, which is the theme of this meeting, and social exclusion?

Answer by Marco Ricceri

In our societies we are registering a profound change, not only in working conditions and in the organization of families, but also in the mentality and life perspective of people, whose horizon is becoming increasingly narrow to the point of giving up any community commitment, to self-exclusion from a condition of active participation in some form of common progress. Social precariousness, in my opinion, is connected to all the conditions that make it difficult for a person to imagine and pursue positive projects, both in work and in life. If the context in which a person lives operates according to rigid patterns that leave no room for autonomous choices (the digital control society), or does not help people to express or realize their true aspirations (weakening of the welfare state), then this person it is induced to withdraw more and more into its own restricted sphere, to withdraw into itself, not to participate actively in the common life. Closure and refusal are the most evident signs of social precariousness.

Up to social exclusion, when precariousness from an economic fact becomes cultural and existential. In this case the person tends to become a monad who no longer believes in anything, basically not even in himself; she does not believe in the present, she erases both the past and the future. We find an example of this self-exclusion from social life in the widespread phenomenon of young NEETs, young people who withdraw into themselves, refusing everything: work, education, training. And also to organize a family, generate children, etc. It is the ever-widening community of the self-excluded; with all the negative consequences that this withdrawal into oneself has on community life, starting with demographic trends.

Quite different are those profound changes of mentality that lead people to give up a certain way of life and to imagine another one not linked to the level of economic well-being but in search of a different quality of life, for themselves and in the relationship with others. It is the widespread phenomenon of the "great resignation", of the "great renunciation" that has occurred in the United States, but also in Italy. An important phenomenon whereby people give up operating according to certain parameters - career, economic enrichment, etc. - to find themselves better in a different context and lifestyle; more modest, if you like, less well-off, but more genuine and truer. In reality it is the symptom of a need: that of living one's life according to more valid values than those traditionally affirmed in society. In any case, this change too, which in my opinion is erroneously classified as a new phenomenon of social precariousness, is destined to have an important impact on traditional community arrangements.

Comments by Peter Herrmann

A first question. Obviously it's nice to be able to have an alternative life, compared to the one that people lead according to traditional patterns and values. But if I look around I see that in rich Berlin, in rich countries like Germany, there are people who live in very limited conditions, for example in rooms of ten square meters. How to deal with this problem of the great disparities existing in our communities? We are not dealing with isolated cases, with exceptions. Many people are struggling with these kinds of basic needs. It is really difficult in these cases to get them to think about the values of a possible alternative life.

Another issue, for which the scientific community bears a great responsibility. What real, concrete support tools need to be made available to people who are struggling and trying to be economically active in terms of production, active in reproducing their daily life? We forget it easily, but obviously it is a matter of empowerment, of social quality, of cohesion to be promoted in practical terms.

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Features of precarious employment in Russia

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Introduction

The analysis of this problem is based on the data of sociological studies conducted in 2018-2022 by sociologists of the Russian State University for the Humanities. The results of the completed project made it possible to draw important theoretical and methodological conclusions that have not only scientific, but also practical significance. They reflect both the common features inherent in other European countries and the specific features of Russian society.

The 2018 and 2022 studies were carried out in the context of the entire Russian economy with a sample size of 1200 people. A representative sample model was built in compliance with the proportions of the employed population, in accordance with the statistical data of the Russian Statistics. The calculation of empirical parameters of quotas for the search and selection of respondents by interviewers was carried out, taking into account the share of the employed population (proportionately) aged 18 years and older: 1) by federal districts; 2) by types of 5 settlements; 3) by socio-professional composition (attached in the description of the quantitative parameters of the sampling model). A total of 106 settlements were selected, including 2 megacities, 19 administrative centers of subjects of the Russian Federation, 35 regional centers, 33 villages, 17 urban-type settlements (urban settlements).

The data of the first study made it possible to identify sectors of the economy and culture in which the spread of various forms of informal, temporary, part-time employment was most pronounced. In accordance with this, in 2019, 2020 and 2021, studies were conducted in certain areas of the economy and culture: in industry, construction, transport, agriculture, the service sector, as well as in the areas of education, science and healthcare, in which, given the sample size 900 people were held. representative surveys of the economically active population of Russia aged 18 years and older.

1-General and specific features of the precariat

A new class is being formed in Russia, which still bears the features of *protoclass* in many respects, but has clear class-forming features. It was concluded that the indicators (criteria) of this class are: a) non-guaranteed social and legal status (absence or short-term employment contract); b) specific forms of organization of the labor process (part-time, episodic or seasonal employment); c) arbitrary wages or its ersatz (payment in envelopes); d) total or partial absence of social guarantees; e) detachment from decision-making in their organization. These include the socio-psychological perception of their social position, when workers do not see the prospects of public and private life that satisfy them. According to our calculations, at present in Russia, based on the identified criteria, 70-75% of the economically active population can be attributed to the precariat, and its employment can be called precarious.

A more detailed analysis of the data obtained showed that precarious employment manifests itself differently in various sectors of the economy and culture: it is especially high in the construction, transport, and service industries.

Analysis of the data showed that every third or fourth employee works on the terms of an oral, not formalized legal agreement, especially when performing temporary and episodic tasks. This often happens under pressure from the employer under the pretext of receiving higher wages by the employee. Added to this are the considerations of the employer: these workers can be fired without resorting to the procedures that must be followed in legal employment. This was clearly manifested in the situation with the outbreak of the coronavirus epidemic, when there was a massive layoff of

workers - almost 50% of medium and small businesses resorted to this. Similar processes take place after the start of a special military operation.

The study showed that the next indicator of employment precarization - organization and working conditions - is in a state that reflects the path of stagnation and even recession of the Russian economy over the past decade. Currently, 52% said they work more than 8 hours, and their working day was 11.2 hours. In our opinion, this is dictated by two circumstances: a) the requirement of the employer to work for one reason or another over the prescribed time, which is typical for construction, transport, and the service sector; b) self-exploitation, the desire to prove one's ability to work, to demonstrate adherence to a trusted position and agreement with the requirement to work over the standard time. As a result, 22% of employees, i.e. one in five (in transport - one in four - 25%) are afraid of losing their job. In other words, the employee is in a situation of direct or indirect pressure on his labor behavior. And so the first reaction of many of them is the desire to keep their jobs. At the same time, the reverse process also takes place. An analysis of real changes in the trajectories of people's labor behavior shows that over the past 3 years, 26.3% changed jobs 2-3 times, and 12.5% - more than three times. There are especially many of these among those who do not have an employment contract - 36.9%. Such data indicate ultra-high proportions of changes in the structure of employment, which most directly affect labor productivity and production efficiency. The unresolved many problems with the organization of labor and management leads to the fact that 22% are not satisfied with their work, and in such industries as construction, transport and services - from 40 to 45%. In our opinion, it is quite natural to assume - but will these employees be an effective workforce, ensure the growth of labor productivity, consciously participate in improving the work of the organization? After all, it is obvious that the fundamental issues of increasing the efficiency of production can be solved only under the conditions of scientific (practices speak of normal) organization of labor and management, as evidenced by both world and domestic (including Soviet) experience.

As for such an indicator of precarious employment as the deformity of the financial situation, the researchers came to the conclusion that such an indicator as "average wages" is a kind of euphemism that not only clarifies, but camouflages the true situation with the real state of wages and characteristics of the income of the working population. More precisely, in our opinion, the use of another term "median wage", which is currently approximately 32-34 thousand rubles (530-550 US). And if we apply another - modal - approach to separate people living below the poverty line, then we get such an indicator - 20-22 thousand rubles (330-340 US). which, according to official statements, guarantees a person's life from poverty. According to our study, the average monthly salary was 28,935 rubles (480 US). (according to official data, it is 50.5 thousand (740US), that is, within the median wage. And this means that most of the workers in the main sectors of the economy are on the verge of satisfying the minimum of their needs. Data from 2021 showed that people's focus on decent pay has only intensified, with almost 70% saying they are unfairly or not always fairly paid. This assessment was especially common in construction and transport - three out of four respondents said so, respectively. The final characteristic of the financial situation can be an assessment of the financial situation, which, according to every fourth person (24%), has worsened over the past 3 years.

The precarious position of an employee can be concretized through an analysis of the real state of social guarantees and social protection. As polls showed, every second (50.7%) said that their employer does not guarantee wages (full or partial) in case of a forced stoppage of production. This is especially disturbed in construction (75%), in the service sector (74.3%) and in transport (80.7%). Dismissal or, as a sparing measure, sending an employee on unpaid leave is widespread.

This practice, as current information shows, has become especially widespread in the fight against coronavirus. Infringement also manifests itself in vacation pay: one in four said that it is not guaranteed in their organization, and in construction, transport and services, this was stated by 47.3%, 63% and 49.3%, respectively. Another guarantee - payment of sick leaves - is also far from always observed. This was stated by every fifth (22.8%), and in construction, transport and services, this applies to almost every second employee (respectively 45.7%, 62.3% and 59.3%).

Such a review of the application and use of guarantees allows us to conclude that in the existing market relations, the rights of the employee are massively neglected. Therefore, it is not surprising that when asked “Who will you turn to for help in a difficult situation?” the first places were taken by family members (88.3%), friends (59.8%), comrades (colleagues) at work (20%). In the eyes of workers, hope for the trade union, local authorities, political parties, and the church is completely lost. There is some hope for the head of an enterprise and organization (13-15%), but even employee is of lesser importance compared to the Soviet era, when many workers were confident in the effectiveness of their leaders.

Characterizing the features of precarious employment in Russia, we also proceeded from the fact that one of its indicators is involvement (direct or indirect) in decision-making regarding the life world of a person, his fate, his future, his confidence that he can influence their preparation. and implementation. The study showed that a stable idea has firmly formed in the minds of people that they (91%) cannot really influence national and federal authorities in any way. It should be noted that there has been a slight increase in participation (full and partial) in management (35-36%) where people work, where they can influence ongoing processes to one degree or another.

The data on participation in the activities of public organizations also speak of the detachment from participation in solving urgent life problems. Studies have shown that from 66% (in science) to 82% (in agriculture), 86,7% (in construction) and 90,7% (in transport) representatives of these sectors of the economy do not belong to any professional, political or public organization and culture. All this allows us to come to the conclusion about the significant and even complete detachment of workers from the active manifestation of social solidarity, about disbelief in its necessity and effectiveness, which can rightfully be attributed to a state of anomie, when the former guidelines for (co)participation in social movements and organizations disappeared, and new ones did not form.

Generalizations are made and a characteristic is given of the degree of prevalence of tension in connection with solving the problems of precarious employment and determining the potential and real manifestation of social tension. However, a low level of protest activity was revealed. In general, in all sectors - participation in demonstrations, strikes, pickets was up to 6%, and in signing petitions and appeals - up to 7%, then from the fall of 2020 - these figures began to grow and reached 8 and 9%, respectively, which, in our opinion, it is connected with the problems that have arisen in the process of impact on the working and everyday life of Russians of the coronavirus epidemic. It should be especially noted that, due to their unguaranteed social status, precarious groups tend not only to express, but also to realize their discontent through various forms of protest - labor, environmental, cultural-historical, social and domestic, etc.

In the process of research in 2018-2020, such a significant phenomenon as self-exploitation was revealed, when an employee, in an effort to stay and ensure the stability of his workplace, spends more of his physical and intellectual forces to achieve this goal and at the same time, incommensurate with remuneration.

A special place in the characteristics of precarious employment is occupied by such a socio-psychological indicator as uncertainty about one's social position, not only at the current moment, but also in the future, in one's future. One in four stated that they feel helpless and unable to influence what is happening, which fully correlates with the previously given data on (co)participation in the management of state and public affairs. These and other feelings that people have expressed suggest that the loss of hopes and guarantees of sustainable well-being is closely related to these significant social and personal orientations.

Thus, the emergence of a precariat with specific forms of employment is the result and consequence of not only deep technological and information processes that have brought cardinal changes in the use of labor. This process of attracting and using human capital is full of serious costs and depends on the absence of a targeted social policy. Therefore, the proposals formulated by us, implemented at the theoretical and applied levels, can contribute to the creation of scientifically based programs for solving the contradictions that arise in the working and everyday life of many people, and especially young people, who are employed in unstable, unstable and unguaranteed, i.e., precarious work.

2- The emergence of a new class: Precariat

The conducted studies allow us to assert that in Russia at the present time a fundamentally different configuration of the social class structure of society has developed and exists. Along with the ruling and middle class, social strata, communities and groups that are characterized by a long-term unstable and unstable social situation, which is primarily manifested in the sphere of labor relations, began to occupy an increasing and significant place. This process of a radical change in the social structure is taking place all over the world, including Russia, which allows us to assert the emergence of a NEW CLASS - PRECARIAT. Based on the information received, the definition of the precariat is given as a fundamentally new phenomenon of the socio-economic structure of society, which means the presence of social strata, communities and groups, who embody alienation not only from the results of labor, but also from the whole of society, and experiencing special, sophisticated forms of exploitation of their labor, their knowledge, their qualifications, which ultimately affects their quality of life.

The concept of precariat is of great practical importance: a) economic (for understanding the fundamental changes in the labor market and labor relations), b) political (for understanding the social base of political parties and the origins of labor conflicts that acquire ideological and ideological significance), c) social (to understand the origins and growth of social inequality and protest moods), d) legal (for the constant adjustment of the norms of rights in connection with the increase in dissatisfaction with the existing labor relations between employers and employees), e) managerial (to develop forms and methods for regulating emerging changes in the world of work).

The proven results include the determination of labor precariousness levels. To this end, based on the analysis of the data obtained, it can be argued that from 30% to 70% of employees (depending on the sector of the economy and culture) can be attributed to precarious employment, but with varying degrees of intensity.

Based on the use of the concept of "life world", the hypothesis was tested and confirmed that precarity should be interpreted as a phenomenon related not only to the sphere of work, but to all spheres of public life, which becomes relevant in connection with: a) significant and fundamental changes associated with the implementation of the scientific, technological and information revolution, which leads to the emergence and / or release of significant groups of production professions; b) the ongoing socio-economic policy, which has not solved or weakly solved many problems of employment, poverty, non-guaranteed implementation of many proclaimed rights and freedoms. As a result, a high level of anomie in political life was registered (in the year of the survey - 2022 - up to 72% did not belong to any public organization, 48.6% did not participate in any form of socio-political activity. 30.5% said deterioration in the life of their family, 33% assess the environmental situation at the place of residence as unsatisfactory, 26.3% feel helplessness to influence what is happening, 22% - fear of the future, 18.4% - a sense of injustice.

3-The new scenarios of the sharing economy and gig economy

An analysis of general trends in changing various forms of employment made it possible to identify and focus on such *specific forms as the sharing economy and the gig economy*.

As for the *sharing economy*, it is a new emerging economic industry, the feature of which is collective consumption, and the intermediary is the Internet, which indicates it is more like a market for goods than a labor market. The number of Russian workers employed in the sharing economy is 2.5 million people.

Speaking of the *gig economy*, these are labor relations, which are mainly of a short-term, project-based nature. A review of these specific niches of the economy leads to the conclusion that the sharing economy and the gig economy have both positive and negative features. Positive features include economic benefits (reducing costs for both consumers and organizations), environmental benefits (reuse of already produced goods), benefits for human development (access to those benefits that could previously be used only after purchase, gratuitous exchange practices are improving). In addition, the employee gets the opportunity to monetize their hobbies, using even a narrow specialty

for a side job or a full-fledged income. Ultimately, this leads to an increase in economic subjectivity, because such an employee takes responsibility for his income, health, level and quality of life.

An important conclusion about the role of the sharing economy and the gig economy is its function, which allows damping precarization. Firstly, a decrease in income or instability of income does not have such a significant impact on the quality of a person's life due to the fact that the consumer has the opportunity to temporarily use the good without buying it. Second, cutting jobs or keeping a job with precarious working conditions no longer looks like a no-brainer, as the gig economy makes it possible to work without a permanent employer.

Closing remark

Based on the analysis, the introduction of the concept of "*precarious employment*" into scientific circulation and management practice is justified, which characterizes the position of an employee in the labor market more accurately and more clearly than the currently used terms "*standard and non-standard employment*", "*formal and informal employment*", "*typical and atypical employment*".

It is proved that under the conditions of the Fourth Industrial Revolution precarious employment becomes the most important characteristic feature of the state of the labor force, indicating an unstable, unstable and unguaranteed position of an ever-increasing number of workers in all sectors of the national economy and culture.

Such a significant increase in economically and socially disadvantaged people allows us to talk about the formation of a new class, which is based on a fundamentally new form of employment - precarious, which is generated, on the one hand, by the objective needs of production, requiring new technical and technological approaches to the organization of labor, and on the other hand, the use of fundamentally different forms of using the labor force, characterized by new methods of exploitation.

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ANNEX 1

Precariat versus precarious societies

An essay by Peter HERRMANN¹

Executive Summary

In recent years, it has become commonplace to speak of precarity and even of the precariat, whether in popular political discourse or in the social sciences. People living under precarious conditions, especially those who are negatively affected in terms of employment, are by some even seen as new social class. The present contribution aims to refocus the debate. It is proposed to speak of precarious societies; what is usually understood as precarious employment or living conditions is seen as consequence or side effect of a problem that goes far beyond the widely accepted understanding of precarity that emerges from a so-called neoliberal policy context.²

Introduction

It may sound cynical, but in some ways the current labour market situation can be seen as less dramatic than it is usually portrayed. Looking at the situation in Germany in particular - although the same is broadly true for many other Western European countries - after the roaring years of the “economic miracle” there has been an increasingly dramatic state of affairs with regard to employment. Two overlapping secular developments in particular deserve our attention:

- One can be characterised by the divergence between the supply of and demand for living labour. What appears to be a more or less trivial divergence is in fact a highly complicated and complex issue. We are dealing with absolute numbers of workers and production – in fact, the available labour force (traditionally categorised as blue collar workers) is growing in numbers, while the living labour is becoming more skilled; on the other hand, the production/demand for durable consumer goods (e.g. household appliances, etc.) is slowing down in many countries, after the extremely high demand for specific goods following the legacy of the Second World War: destroyed lives, destroyed regions, destroyed cities and destroyed households – metaphorically speaking, the late spring and early summer, after the hell of a harsh winter, calmed the initial mushrooming of the economy in the early spring. It is worth noting that for many of the most devastated regions, especially those that had been supported by contributions from the United States of America, there was even a kind of advantage, namely a new start with the most advanced means and methods of production and a real boost to consumption, as almost “everyone needed everything at the same time”. This last factor is particularly important in the current context, as it means that the relative demand for living labour has not kept pace with the increase in productivity. In other words, productivity growth did not depend on the expansion of living labour. While the West, and in particular the Federal Republic of Germany, was able to maintain a stable bulwark position, the economic foundations of the countries of Eastern

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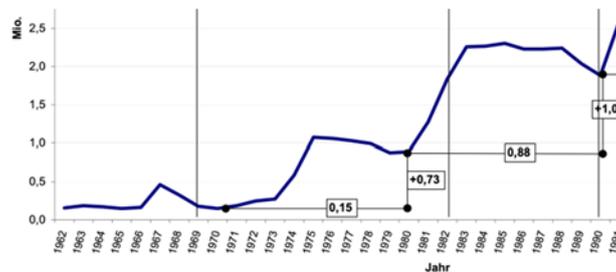
Dr. phil (Bremen, Germany). Studies in Sociology (Bielefeld, Germany), Economics (Hamburg), Political Science (Berlin) and Social Policy and Philosophy (Bremen). Had been teaching at several Third Level Institutions across the EU; currently correspondent to the Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Social Law (Munich, Germany), senior advisor to the European Foundation on Social Quality (Amsterdam, Netherlands) and Director of the Independent Research Institute European Social, Organisational and Science Consultancy (Aghabullogue, Ireland) and senior research fellow at the University College of Cork, Department of Applied Social Studies, (Cork, Ireland)

In different contexts and positions he was involved in research projects dealing with areas as for instance occupational health and safety in public services, agriculture and others, development of indicators on social quality, social service provision, social benefit systems, Human Rights and others.

He worked as well actively in the voluntary organisations nationally and on the supranational level. From here he has a close insight into institutional settings of the EU and as well in issues currently on the social policy agenda. More recently he became especially engaged in economics and philosophy of law, working towards an integrative approach, bringing different arrays of social science together. This marks his activities at the Human Rights Centre in Changsha, where he engages in strengthening international cooperation and his engagement in the European Academy of Science and Arts.

²See in this context e.g. Birch, Kean, 2017: A Research Agenda For Neoliberalism; Cheltenham/Northampton: Edward Elgar

Europe slowly but surely began to crumble under the weight of more severe destruction and the need to pay reparations. Later, in the early/mid 1970s, the looming figure of 1,000,000 unemployed was seen as a kind of threshold in economic, social and political terms: crossing it was seen as a Rubicon towards dangerous destabilisation.³ Soon, however, there was a change of attitude – even much higher figures were accepted:



(Hinrichs, Jutta/Giebel-Felten, Elvira, 2002: *Die Entwicklung des Arbeitsmarktes 1962-2001*; Sankt Augustin: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., Juli 2002: 5; *Arbeitspapier* Nr. 82; https://www.kas.de/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=21593393-4d59-3806-114c-17d164465456&groupId=252038; 08/04/2023)

Of course, no one would argue that unemployment, especially high unemployment, is the same as precariousness. But even at that time it was clear that unemployment had a specific character, namely that it was structural. It was a time when new forms of poverty and social exclusion, also the image of a new social question, were entering the stages of various discourses in the social science debate – all this was closely linked to local poverty reporting, which aimed to make visible the structural character and the effects on the entire life course, and also the link to deep socio-economic distortions.

- This brings us to the second aspect, namely the divergence between private wealth and public poverty – in a nutshell, public budgets have been strained by increasing demands as a necessary response to unemployment, poverty, health care and, in particular, old-age pensions/care for the elderly; at the same time, the inequality was already evident: huge amounts of capital or money were concentrated in the hands of a small group of people, not least as result of windfall profits, following from a highly export-oriented economy and low corporate tax rates.

In short, the socio-economic crisis, combined with demographic patterns and technological progress, developed in a way that laid the foundations for today's precarious employment and living conditions.

As tragic as many individual biographies are, it is essential to arrive at a correct analysis that avoids focusing on reforms that are in fact a return to the conditions that necessarily caused today's problems. In other words, we must fully accept *Albert Einstein's* wisdom that we should not try to solve problems with the means that led us into the crisis.⁴

1-Political economy – the pillars on which precarity stands

Since the debate on precarity is usually concerned with issues of (un)employment, it is natural that economic paradigms are used to explain the structure and process of precarisation. In particular, political economy, and more specifically the theory of neoliberalism, is used. A fundamental flaw in the debate, however, is its focus on the micro-level, and specifically on issues such as the

³Of course, all this being part of a complex contradictory situation: protests against the war in Vietnam and the blind allegiance of the western allies, the unveiling of the fascist activities of many members of the "new" ruling class, the armament, the "authoritarian character" characterising the petty bourgeoisie and working class ...

⁴Supposedly this goes back to Einstein's emergency call: "Our world faces a crisis as yet unperceived by those possessing power to make great decisions for good or evil. The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything safe our modes of thinking and we thus drift toward unparalleled catastrophe.

We scientists who released this immense power have an overwhelming responsibility in this world life-and-death struggle to harness the atom for the benefit of mankind and not for humanity's destruction. (*Atomic education urged by Einstein. Scientist in plea for \$200,000 to promote new type of essential thinking; in: The New York Times. Published: May 25, 1946*).

individualisation of labour contracts, the undermining of the role of trade unions, the competitiveness of especially large companies that are supposedly too big to fail, and so on and so forth. The question is, however, whether such a focus allows for a sufficient understanding of the actual change. Beyond this neo-liberal turn, in particular the following need to be emphasised when thinking about the structural transformation of capitalism.

First, globalisation is becoming a reality, and with it the boomerang effect (*see in this context also: Patel, Raj/Moore, Jason W., 2018: A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things. A Guide to Capitalism, Nature, and the Future of the Planet; London/New York: Verso*):

- the cheap becomes expensive
- the distant becomes close
- the bill is presented

Secondly, public debt (lack of education, health and prevention problems, public budget constraints...) is becoming acute and is showing up on national and international balance sheets. While the theory of value as presented by *Marx* seems to be invalidated, we are actually witnessing its proof.

(i) It is important to recognise that the theory of value is not about an instrument for calculating individual income, at least in the current understanding of income/wage. Rather, it is about the social determination of value and the distribution of social value, which is ultimately limited to the value obtained in connection with commodities.

(ii) Consequently, three factors are of central importance:

1. Taking up the theory of economic sectors – proposing a shift from primary to secondary and then tertiary sector activities (*Colin Clark, Jean Fourastié, Alan Fisher*), later extended for example with the proposal of seven sectors (*see Sanguin, André-Louis, 1976: Une nouvelle distinction des secteurs d'activité en géographie économique; in: Bulletin de l'Association des Géographes Français; 473-438 : 289-294 ; [- \(i\) higher productivity \(historical\)
- \(ii\) replacement of living labour
- \(iii\) externalisation \(e.g. administrative work...\)](https://www.persee.fr/doc/bagf_0004-5322_1976_num_53_437_4927#:~:text=Au%20fil%20des%20ans%2C%20la,%20la%20consommation%20et%20à; 04/05/2023</i>), we do not observe a devaluation of the upstream sectors. Instead, we find a quadruple determination:</p>
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2. and last but not least (perhaps the most important in terms of the debate on value)

(iv) the socialisation of value creation (i.e. the assumption/coverage of costs by the state) affects the upstream sectors in particular; at the same time, we find that the downstream sectors are – apparently – becoming less productive. In fact, this is a false conclusion for four reasons:

- *the appropriation is private*
- *productivity depends to a large extent on unpaid or underpaid inputs from other sectors and countries, etc. (see the work of Mazzucato, Mariana, e.g. 2013: The entrepreneurial state. Debunking public versus private sector myths; Anthem Press);*
- *profit is generated not least on the basis of violent political action, in particular the avoidance of paying taxes and the withdrawal from any kind of social obligation – the entrepreneurial state goes hand in hand with an anarchist state built on the recipes of Ayn Rand;*
- *the sectors concerned are largely unproductive, extracting value from other sectors.*

2-New economic polities - building a new roof

The last few paragraphs have already shown a shift towards the direct translation of economic power into political power, to the point where the polity itself becomes a quasi-enterprise, ruled by arbitrary will. The traditional separation of powers, which goes back to Montesquieu's *Spirit of Law*, is being transcended and new leaders are being established, claiming to be superior through the fusion of traditional and charismatic rule, leaving rationality, at least for the area of political decision-making, aside. As a result, the traditional points of reference – the nation state, globality and the global community, democratic government – lose their central functional role.

We are witnessing a paradox due to the fact, that the role of the political area is becoming stronger, but losing the political rational with the reference of people and replacing this by (i) economic rationales conjured with (ii) “individual profitisation”.

3-A new political air – an intellectual-moral turn

The term ‘intellectual-moral turn’ dates back to the German elections of the early 1980s, when the Christian Democrats argued in their election campaign that only such a turn could reconsolidate the German political economy and society. While the claimed ideological reference was made to the so-called social market economy, the strategy aimed in fact at establishing a re-regulated system from which only export-oriented big business would benefit. It is important to note that the whole enterprise was not aimed at establishing a deregulated formation, but at establishing new forms of regulation by accelerating and initialising the whole political economy towards nationalisation, understood as the promotion of national capital and its global competitiveness. It also meant the establishment of new ways of thinking – in this way we can indeed speak of an intellectual-moral turn: it was about thinking in figures and replacing the narrative in this spirit. As such, it is a matter of moving into and through a cul-de-sac with no turning point at the end. Metaphorically, the whole development can indeed be seen as a movement of large economic entities along this one road with two options, namely (a) to get stranded at the sides or (b) to try to move head-on against and through the wall at the end. Internationally, the unscrupulous behaviour of the big four, the so-called GAFAs, the big banks that are considered too big to fail and other major economic players, especially new capital, is evidence of this aggressive strategy.

It is important and difficult to locate this intellectual-moral turn as a process that is rooted in the economic structure, namely the move away from production in the primary sector, and later even in the secondary sector, value-theoretically taken together as abstraction of the whole process. At first glance, we might have the impression that the superstructure is taking over the position historically occupied by the economic base.

In short, the thesis is that alienation – as a social and individual process – defines its expression/transposition into singularity and hyper-individualism:

- to regain power where it is possible, i.e. hic et nunc et ego, commonly observed as shortness of breath and short-sightedness of thought and action,
- to elevate form as the main determinant of communication and the realisation of life, realised today as platform existence, reversing the form-content-dialectic that Hegel characterised by writing:

Thus the form is content and, in keeping with its developed determinacy, it is the law of the appearance. The negative side of the appearance, what is alterable and not self-sufficient, falls to the form as not reflected in itself – it is the indifferent, external form.

(Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, 1817: Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline. Part I: Science of Logic; translated and edited by Klaus Brinkmann/Daniel O. Dahlstrom, Boston University; Cambridge, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2010: 200; <https://www.pdfdrive.com/georg-wilhelm-friedrich-hegel-encyclopaedia-of-the-philosophical-sciences-in-basic-outline-part-1-logic-e157889432.html>; 27/04/2023).

Apparently, the form is now the meaningful part, content becomes random, i.e. situational, pragmatic and spatial, but paradoxically, as such, claims universal applicability (see also *Marshall McLuhan's* work in this context).

- Power through design as content of singularity
 - exchange of purely situational expressions as a new form of communication (as part of it the permanent strive for consumption, supposed innovation and claimed disruption)
 - singularity as a fusion of nature and technology.
- This brings us back to the thinking of *Ayn Rand* and the absolute denial of the role of the state as an organising and structuring entity – the state as the only authority with ultimate power in the form of legitimate physical force, as *Max Weber* saw it in his 1919 writings on *Politics as Vocation*. This sovereign command is replaced for *Rand* by “strong individuals” who can use power arbitrarily and gain legitimacy through personal achievement, not least as bucking the trend in favour of personal advantage. It is interesting to note that the apparently fundamental opposition between the two approaches may be less strict than it appears at first sight: *Jean Bodin*, in *Les Six livres de la Republique*, draws a harmonising line between divine law, natural law and power as sovereign command – an argument similar to that of *Thomas Hobbes*. – In the end, we see a long line from *Machiavelli's* ruler to the modern princes of Silicon Valley.

4-Is it the economy, really?

Of course, at the end of the day we are dealing with economic issues – in the tradition of Marxist thought and the interpretation of the base/superstructure dialectic. Nevertheless, it is important to take the dominant role of politics into account, clearly differentiating between politics, politics and policies. If we take this seriously, we arrive at a point that allows and even forces us to rephrase the question and emphasise the necessity to analyse the characterising role of the economy, structuring the political system and its different components.

As a working hypothesis for the future of the analysis of precarity,⁵ it is proposed to refer to the following “ranking”:

• *The reduction of economic action on commodity production as ultimate goal and function and with this the subsequent detachment of the economic sphere from society • results in the loss of meaning of the political sphere as far as its function of steering socio-political processes is concerned, • leading to precarious societies, characterised by the “streamlining” cohesion along the line of commodities (production and consumption), the latter being reduced on single acts (e.g. production of a car as technical item not production of a part of a complex transport infrastructure⁶), • thus leading to permanent changes in the process of production • and thus of jobs, in other words: the normalisation of precarity in respect of employment, • translating life into short-termist coping strategies. Taken together, we are dealing with at least six layers:*

- *precarious economies*– characterised by the quasi-separation of use and exchange value (*Marx*)
- *precarious societies* – characterised by the quasi-separation of economy and society (*Polanyi*)
- *precarious employment* – characterised by the dissolution in time, space and profile of stable (dependent or freelance) work
- *precarious socio-economic security* – characterised by continuously linking of social security to – now imaginary – standard employment

⁵ Here taken in the widest and somewhat casual understanding

⁶ Why produce cars that are capable to reach high speed while speed limits are introduced though they are in many cases not even necessary due to congestion.

- *precarious life cycle – characterised by the lack of predictability of work/employment*
- *precarious life – characterised by the lack of a clear management framework.*

5-Review

Usually, the analysis of precariousness starts from the evolution of employment: the dissolution of a stable framework of work itself and of the social security system developed over time to limit the dictatorial power of corporate interests.⁷ We can speak of a kind of concentric circle, starting with precarious employment, through socio-economic insecurity and socio-cultural disintegration, to general, not least psychological, disorientation. While such a view rejects any attribution of blame to individuals or specific institutions, we even find the suggestion of the precariat as a class (*Standing, Guy, 2011: The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class; London et al.: Bloomsbury Publishing*), there remains some notion of individualisation or personalisation: while in very broad terms social development is mentioned, and in particular – again in very broad terms – political-economic factors of development are named, using the term neoliberalism, the interpretation suggests that the problem is given by the breaking of the framework of socio-economic security, leaving individuals ‘alone’, depending on their own adaptability. While this is admittedly difficult, the burden is left to those who are challenged to adapt to the changed and changing conditions. The change of conditions itself is not questioned or qualified – though not necessarily tacitly accepted, let alone welcomed, it remains by and large unquestioned. The first part of *Fredric Jameson’s* suggestion, that

(i)t seems to be easier for us today to imagine the thoroughgoing deterioration of the earth and of nature than the breakdown of late capitalism (Jameson, Fredric, 1994: The Seeds of time; quoted from: https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Fredric_Jameson; 29/04/2023)

is widely accepted, but the second part, namely

perhaps because of a weakness in our imagination

is rarely considered as a matter to be addressed, although this loss is at the heart of his elaboration, unfolded in his work on *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism (Jameson, Fredric, 1991: Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism; Durham: Duke University Press)*.

Indeed, it seems that there are two options: the conservative is about securing the daily lives of those now under pressure from the reactionary aspirations of capitalism, aiming to restore what has often been captured by the term Manchester capitalism, led by a class often quasi-feudal in its claims to rule; the progressive is about accepting change as a matter of accepting the need to break the shackles of the present mode of production. What is easily overlooked is that such a progressive perspective is twofold. One option is to maintain the fundamentals of the still dominant system, namely: • the assessment of wealth by reference to the production of commodities; • with this, the emphasis on individual consumption as the highest form of freedom and consistency of life; • the reference to growth as the ultimate means of maintaining and increasing wealth, • the shaping of social relationships along the lines of contracts, • and, as a consequence of all this, the acceptance of inequality, which leads to a ‘healthy climate of competition’ that allows and forces everyone to perform according to the principle that ‘*Man Forges His Own Destiny*’ – which actually strengthens this principle, since the traditional security mechanisms are largely undermined. Things have certainly changed since the phrase was first coined: Women are in the same situation, depending on their own efforts, showing the ambiguity of the individualisation of socio-economic maintenance. – This approach recalls the statement in *Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa’s The Leopard*:

⁷To be clear, such interest could overlap to some extent and temporarily with the interest of the employee, easily evidenced by the interest of both sides in a healthy, appropriately educated/trained workforce”.

Se vogliamo che tutto rimanga come è, bisogna che tutto cambi. – If we want things to remain as they are, things must change.

It must be emphasised that the bureaucratic structure and the contractual relationship, based on the principle of formal equality, are in fact reversed and systematically transformed into relationships of inequality by virtue of their embeddedness. Taking *Richard Sennett's* work on *The Erosion of Character* as an example, we can look at employment contracts. Although *Sennett* is referring to the era in which contracts are being dissolved, the statement can be seen to apply to earlier times as well. And although he is talking about a white-collar freelancer, we can take what he says cum grano salis to apply to blue-collar workers who were contractually bound in an earlier stage of capitalism.

To find work, he has fallen subservient to the schedules of people who are in no way obliged to respond to him. Like other consultants, he wants to work in accordance with contracts setting out just what the consultant will do. But these contracts, he says, are largely fictions. A consultant usually has to take one way and another in response to the changing whims or thoughts of those who pay; Rico has no fixed role that allows him to say to others, 'This is what I do, this is what I am responsible for.'

(Sennett, Richard, 1998: The Corrosion of Character. The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism; New York/London: W.W. Norton & Company: 19)

While this one-sided dependency has certainly increased, it is true that the same inequality applied to workers in earlier times. Particularly in the case of individualisation, each worker was completely dependent on the employer, who could arbitrarily demand the provision of services that were not contractually regulated. While it is true that this was against the law, it is also true that the law is not power-neutral, but allows at least its definition and implementation to be determined by economic power.

The alternative is emerging in the form of a fundamental change, which first of all redefines the understanding of wealth and thus the telos of economic activity. Wealth is seen as a matter of real life in its entirety, where goods are just that: things that are good for improving and facilitating life. As *Marx* said,

(u)ltimately, all economy is a matter of economy of time. Society must also allocate its time appropriately to achieve a production corresponding to its total needs, just as the individual must allocate his time correctly to acquire knowledge in suitable proportions or to satisfy the various demands on his activity.

(Marx, Karl, 1857-1858: Economic Manuscripts (First Version of Capital); in: Marx&Engels. Collected Works. Volume 29: Marx 1857-61; Lawrence&Wishart. Electric Books, 2010: 109)

If, with *Frederick Engels*, we take as the telos of economic activity the production and reproduction of everyday life, and not the perpetuation of the economic process itself, measured in terms of the quantity of commodities produced, the management of time acquires a dimension that goes far beyond the provision of an operand. Time is perhaps the only factor that is not actually divisible, although the division is permanent and seems elementary: the moment the future becomes present, the moment is already shifting this moment into the past to become past itself, while the new future gains the fluid identity of being past for a moment before it becomes past... – or to use the formulation of *Michael Ende's* riddle in the novel *The Neverending Story* (*Ende, Michael, 1979: Die unendliche Geschichte; Thienemann Verlag*)

All dwelling in one house are strange brothers three,/ as unlike as any three brothers could be,/ yet try as you may to tell brother from brother,/ you'll find that

the trio resembles each other./ The first isn't there, though he'll come beyond doubt./ The second's departed, so he's not about./ The third and the smallest is right on the spot,/ and manage without him the others could not./ Yet the third is a factor with which to be reckoned/ because the first brother turns into the second./ You cannot stand back and observe number three,/ for one of the others is all you will see./ So tell me, my child, are the three, of them one?/ Or are there but two? Or could there be none? / Just name them, and you will at once realize/ that each rules a kingdom, of infinite size./ They rule it together and are it as well./ In that, they're alike, so where do they dwell?

(taken from: <https://www.universalserenity.com/momos-riddle/>; 30/04/2023)

The current formation – the reduction of the value of commodity production – involves and even depends on a violent disruption of time, which leads to a synthetic fragmentation: socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-psychological patterns are formed in this spirit: • while bureaucratic structures – and securities – are being dissolved, • production oriented towards the supply of goods and delivery of services • guided, at least to some extent, by the orientation towards the satisfaction of demands⁸ - is being replaced by production for the sake of maintaining the profit-driven supply of goods and services, the whole process driven by the need for short capital turnover times, aimed at compensating for the growing organic composition of capital, • reducing character formation on adaptation to short-term demands of ‘fulfilment’. Quoting again from *Richard Sennett's* writings on *The Erosion of Character*, we take a passage that allows a sober understanding of what has happened and is happening before our eyes.

‘People are hungry for (change),’ the management guru James Champy argued, because ‘the market may be “consumer driven” as never before in history.’ The market, in this view, is too dynamic to permit doing things the same way year after year, or doing the same thing. The economist Bennett Harrison believes the source of this hunger for change is “impatient capital”, the desire for rapid return; for instance, the average length of time stocks have been held on British and American exchanges has dropped 60% in the last 15 years. The market believes rapid market return is best generated by rapid institutional change.

(Sennet, Richard, 1998: The Corrosion of Character. The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism; New York/London: W.W. Norton & Company: 22 f.; with reference to Champy, James, 1995: Re-engineering Management; New York: HarperBusiness: p. 119; pp. 39-40)

It also highlights the ambiguity, the fact that any assessment depends on the point of departure, in particular the supply- or demand-side driven approach, and with it a paradox: what is generally considered to be the supply side, namely the supply of goods and services, turns out to be a matter of demand: it is the producer who needs buyers, since selling goods is the only purpose of production. On the other hand, the so-called demand side provides a fertile ground for expanding production. In reality we see this in the form of a constant acceleration of supply – new phones, new gadgets, new designs, software and hardware upgrades, new fashions, new equipment..., possibly presented as a response to consumer choice, in reality asking consumers to “want” what they already have, just in a different shape, colour or with slightly different features. The use value is only newness per se, which allows the realisation of exhibiting distinctiveness as the actual use value.

A suitable tool for increasing supply is the sowing of entropy – and under current conditions this is more or less easy, requiring little more than the provision of formal points of contact, suitable for offering short-term ‘solutions’, detached as the problem to which they offer an answer is limited to an isolated question – the most obvious example is probably the doctor who analyses and treats a

⁸Even if the demands had been always somewhat artificially evoked and promoted, e.g. by aggressive advertisement

peptic ulcer without discussing the patient's diet and living conditions – easily reversed into an almost inexhaustible array of diets and behavioural therapies from lay psychology as examples of stimulating entropy: Everyone is chasing a diet that works as universally as possible, that has an answer for all cases. – Coherence may be missed subjectively and emotionally by social actors, but it is difficult to achieve and certainly does not provide a social perspective under the given conditions. On the contrary, the actors increasingly perceive problems, situations, constellations as personal, as matters that concern only them – although this is a psychological phenomenon, it is important to recognise it as a socio-psychological factor and as such an expression of a political-economic constellation that is based on and thrives on segmentation: while profit is achieved by making always new offerings of items that require ideally subsequent purchases, all of them – ideally – with a short consumption period,⁹ the same holds true for the person(ality): the realisation of capital, bound to short-termism, breaks up chronological time for consumers and citizens:

- strict organisation is bound to the rationality of the product
- thus removed from time and space as meaningful parameters
- disconnected from the actual producer who is made an annex to the process of production;
- thus the producer perceives his/her action as not being meaningful
- as they are decontextualised: vertically being not part of his/her own “real life”, horizontally being isolated action within a production line that remains veiled, at most being disclosed by linking it to a brand name (“it’s an apple”, “it’s a Merc”, “it’s a Nike”, “it’s a Ferrero” ...)

This goes beyond muddling through and piecemeal strategic behaviour, as we are now faced with the loss of even residual cohesive production and products. What is new is not only the orientation towards profitability –Karl Polanyi already noted in 1944 that profit is “raised to the level of a justification of action and behaviour in everyday life”(Polanyi, Karl, 1944: *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*; Boston: Beacon Press, 1957: 31); what is new, however, is that the orientation towards profit can no longer be based on long-term strategies tied to security and linear progress: the new pattern and stage behind the falling rate of profit, which goes hand in hand with the productization of calculating the organic composition of capital, i.e. relating it to the individual product. If we accept this as necessary, the way in which Richard Sennett characterises Bill Gates takes on explanatory significance, going beyond mere description. He says

Gates, for instance, seems free of the obsession to hold on to things. His products are furious in coming forth and is rapid in disappearing, whereas Rockefeller wanted to own oil rigs, buildings, machinery, or railroads for the long term. Lack of long-term attachment seems to mark Gates attitudes to work toward work: he spoke about positioning oneself in a network of possibilities rather than paralyzing oneself in one particular job. By all accounts he is a ruthless competitor, and the evidence of his greed is a matter of public record; he has devoted only a miniscule slice of his billions to charity or to the public good. But the disposition to bend is evinced by his willingness to destroy what he is made, given the demands of the immediate moment – he has the ability to let go, if not to give.
(Sennet, Richard, 1998: *The Corrosion of Character. The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism*; New York/London: W.W. Norton & Company: 62)

This can easily be translated into the feelings and attitudes of workers in such a precarious society:

What is truly new is that, in the bakery, I caught sight of a terrible paradox. In this high-tech, flexible workplace where everything is user friendly, the worker page personally demeaned by the way they work. In this bakers paradise, that reaction

⁹ A new model nearly ready while the current model is bought.

to their work is something they do not themselves understand. Operationally, everything is so clear; emotionally, so illegible.

(Sennet, Richard, 1998: *The Corrosion of Character. The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism*; New York/London: W.W. Norton & Company: 67 f.)

Pope Francis, in his *Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium*, speaks of a throwaway society (see Pope Francis, 2013: *Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium of the Holy Father Francis to the Bishops, Clergy, consecrated persons and the Lay Faithful on the proclamation of the gospel in today's world*; Città del Vaticano; Libreria Editrice Vaticana), highlighted an important point, but, being caught in a spiritual vision, fell short of distilling the objective factors – greed is a subjective ingredient, but it unfolds only under conditions in which objective values are shifting towards a constellation in which greed is welded into the theory of value (see Herrmann, Peter, 2019: *Theory of value – is there still any value in it? Revisiting Value and Valuation in a Globalising Digital World*; New York: Nova), which makes the core of greed – namely the positioning of the fragmented performance of the personality above the coherent character – part of the wage.

It is also important to reassess the social average needed for production: Because production in the new setting is of a directly social character, and because the product itself and the process of consumption gain a directly social dimension. In short, this means (a) that the production and reproduction of life must be seen as the production and reproduction of social life – e.g. transport and health. It means (b) that input must also be fully recognised with its social aspects. This goes far beyond the input commonly accepted in policy debates under the term ‘social investment’. Instead, a broader understanding requires a perspective on citizenship as a condition for the unfolding of social personalities, which serves as a functional element, i.e. a processual condition and a constantly changing output, which in turn acts as a condition. Complex interrelationality is both condition and result of the changing socio-institutional system. Trust, devotion, love, commitment, recognition, acceptance ... these are just a few of the issues in question: each of them already exists here and now, but is usually limited by being based on formalities, the maximum extension of which is legitimation by procedure, not least leading to trusting someone or something for the moment – *hic et nunc, limitatur ad causam datam*, here and now, limited to the given case. Of course, this is not to be condemned from the outset, for it allows flexibility that the ancient system of a status-driven society could not even imagine.

6-Final Account

Taken together, what follows is intended to clarify the shift in the explanation of precarity from starting the analysis at the level of the precariat as a part of the workforce that is specifically affected by changing working¹⁰ and employment¹¹ conditions, now looking first at the fundamental role of the precariousness of society.

It is the economy, of course, but it is the economy as a matter of a complex process of formation, understood as a matter of the regime of accumulation, the mode of regulation, the regime of life and the mode of living. Important for the characterisation of the capitalist economy, in the present context, are • the changing organic composition of capital, • the great progress in terms of the available means of production, – a question of miniaturisation, digitalisation and artificial intelligence, and with it • the opening up of new possibilities for the organisation and management of work and the realisation of capital, all of this going hand in hand with • an incredible amount of surplus capital in search of investment opportunities, (i) in the hands of a few, and (ii) easily brought together.

A crucial aspect that marks the new stage is given by a peculiar characteristic of the organic composition of capital. At a general level, we are witnessing a contradictory development: to be profitable, the required investment in constant capital is enormous and the conditions for writing off

¹⁰e.g. the wide-spread use of information technology, digitisation, artificial intelligence ...

¹¹ e.g. outsourcing/freelance-isation, projectisation, flat/non-hierarchical management approaches ...

this investment are unfavourable. As bad as this is, we are also witnessing another trend, namely the decline in the organic composition of capital. In concrete terms, this means that short retooling times and a wide range of products for which the equipment can be used result in a somewhat favourable organic composition when assessed at the level of individual products with a high degree of variability, possibly even unique pieces. In other words, the individualisation and customisation of products is another way of counteracting the fall in the rate of profit due to the change in the organic composition of capital.

With this in mind, we must take the changing organic composition as a starting point, since it is a characteristic that more or less defines the whole process, since it determines the need for super-exploitation, which is

as exploitation that depends on so-called noneconomic factors such as gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sexuality, age, and citizenship status. Superexploitation is exploitation greater than might be expected from general economic principles; the use of these so-called noneconomic factors to determine the rate of exploitation would be one conceivable use of the term. My use of this term does not require worker abjection, but it points to the inability of workers to negotiate the wage in the manner imagined in much of both Marxist and neo-classical economics: that is, as abstract “labor,” without the obstacles of these “cultural” factors. In the definition I use here, all exploitation is probably superexploitation. This does not render the term meaningless: it continues to focus our attention on these so-called noneconomic factors in class formation. Supply chain capitalism, I argue, encourages confluences between superexploitation, in this sense, and self-exploitation. Workers establish their economic performance through performances of the very factors that establish their superexploitation: gender, race, ethnicity, and so forth.

(Tsing, Anna, 2009: Supply Chains and the Human Condition; in: Rethinking Marxism: A Journal of Economics, Culture & Society, 21:2; 148-176; here: 158; DOI:10.1080/08935690902743088; <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08935690902743088>)

The other factors flank this orientation and provide the means to set the change in motion. The changing organic composition of capital has, up to a certain point in the history of capitalism, been dealt with by rationalisation (and thus further pressure on the rate of profit) and intensification of work, in other words, by the application of traditionally approved means that were suitable under the ‘old conditions’, i.e. compatible with the regulatory mechanisms generally accepted along the lines of the Keynesian Welfare National State Regime (see Jessop, Bob, 2000: *From the KWNS to the SWPR*; in: Lewis, Gail/Gewirtz, Sharon/Clarke, John (eds.); *Rethinking Social Policy*; London et al.: Sage; 171-184). However, one of the factors that added to the pressure was globalisation, and with it the synchronisation of economic cycles, and the need to speed up the turnover of capital.

The new means of production made it possible to take up the various challenges, but at a price that must be seen as a deterioration of the system. With the collapse of the socialist countries, there was no longer a “real alternative”, which opened the way to the implementation of a harsh regime; the new instruments allowed and promoted the emergence of an accumulation regime that used various mechanisms of outsourcing – these are particularly suitable for exploiting a maximum of labour with a minimum of responsibility. An important structural part of this development has been the violent break-up of existing entities: the company has lost its character as a receptacle that accommodates a large number of workers; the position of the worker has been redefined, turning him/her into a freelance appendix or someone whose employment conditions have been changed: from a strictly rule-bound employee, confined to a strictly defined position within a hierarchy, to a project worker, from a person with a long-term commitment – exiting in a manageable living space, framed and ordered by chronological time, and working in confined spaces – to someone who has to

endure the changed mode of calculation: the given parameters of space and time have not simply acquired a new meaning, but have been dissolved. As such, this should not be seen as a problem; what makes it challenging is the fact that • the dissolution was violent and • it was unilateral.

Taken together, we arrive at a political-economic constellation that shapes the character in a specific way, marking the precariat not as a specific class, but as a mindset of a precarious society. The following cornerstones can be identified as fields of tension that move within a framework of four corners, as shown in the matrix below:

USE VALUE	PROCESSUALITY
STRUCTURATION	EXCHANGE VALUE

We find two diagonal movements and assume that, in a developed, ‘modern’ society, the point of intersection is, so to speak, an ideal to be aspired to. Different elements relate their inherent tensions to each other in a consistent, balanced way. This applies in particular to the following aspects

- chronological and random time
- living and working space
- product-oriented and market-driven production
- control over the means of production
- control over the “aim” of production
- control over the process of production

It is possible to interpret these aspects in a certain historical way, looking on the one hand at production of sustenance, i.e. products that are produced for the direct consumption by the producer, ideally with no dependency from others, following the time as it is given by natural conditions, arriving on the other hand at production that is solely commodity oriented, value defined as exchange value and production following the requirements of the highest efficiency/effectiveness of the process of production, transcending, if necessary, rules of time and space – the producer is reduced to functioning as an input among others, deprived of any characteristic of a living being endowed with a will of its own.

Taking this beyond the individual process of production and looking at the relevant pattern of production at the societal level allows us to understand once again why we speak of precarious societies rather than focusing on employment and related issues. The orientation of the political economy of a country is assessed along two lines: one is the traditional measurement of wealth, clearly defined in the first sentence of the first volume of *Marx’s Capital*, which states that

(t)he wealth of those societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails, presents itself as “an immense accumulation of commodities,”(.) its unit being a single commodity.’ (Marx, Karl, 1867: Capital, Vol. I; in Karl Marx. Frederick Engels. Collected Works. Volume 35; London: Lawrence&Wishart, 1996: 45)

The other is concerned with a broader aspect of wealth – without further exploration, the social quality approach deserves special attention (*see van der Maesen, Laurent J.G./Walker, Alan (eds.), 2012: Social Quality. From Theory to Indicators; Houndsmills/New York: Palgrave MacMillan; Ka Lin/Herrmann, Peter (eds.), 2015: Social Quality Theory. A New Perspective on Social Development; Oxford/New York: Berghahn*); it can be summarised by reversing Marcel’s assessment, presented in *Max Frisch’s Homo Faber*, with the words “standard of living as meaning of life”; the reversal is exactly what the social quality approach proposes: meaning of life achieved by focusing on socio-economic security, social inclusion, social cohesion and social empowerment, defining social quality together and in their interrelationship.

7-Outlook: Digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence

Digitalisation and artificial intelligence have long been seen as fundamental challenges for the development of society. While the subject has been discussed for a long time – *Leibniz* worked out a “working binary code” as early as 1689, his article *Explication de l’Arithmétique Binaire* and the monster *Frankenstein* are from 1818 – the topic has gained importance in recent years. The discussion is dominated by a technical approach, even in economics and sociology. This means, not least, that digitalisation and AI are assessed from the perspective of a traditional view of society and the economy, which sees the traditional way threatened by technology and rarely asks whether society and the economy have actually changed in such a way that the technical means are only a form of “technological expression and perfection” of a renounced change of society and its economy. *Armin Nassehi* suggests as background a specific constellation of complexity:

Whereas in the old world it was possible to deduce almost all other parameters of life from very little information about a person – place of birth/family, position in the sibling line, gender – this is no longer so easy for modern societies. What appears to us as freedom and individualisation of decision-making situations is above all the confusion of the active forces that interact to create structures and order.

Many consider modernity and modernisation processes to be a loss of order. This is a blatant misunderstanding. Modernisation is by no means the loss of order, but rather the explicit reference to order or the creation of order.

(Nassehi, Armin, 2021: Muster. Theorie der digitalen Gesellschaft; Muenchen: C.H. Beck Verlag: 38; own translation)

In fact, the challenges seem to go far beyond economic rationalisation, bringing together solutionism as a societal strategy to cope with the increasing complexity of an increasing number of challenges – the hope of finding a suitable accommodation, even if it is limited in time. In economic terms, it is the fragmentation of products; paradoxically, on the one hand, we find that individual products, gadgets, services are becoming more relevant as such, in their own right, while on the other hand, exactly the opposite can be observed: the principal *pars pro toto* is establishing lifestyles, generational identities, etc., defined by brands, and brand names being defined by such lifestyles. Of course, this is not entirely new – modern technology is in some ways little more than a perfection of what happened before, expressed most radically by the suggestion that

[s]culptures and the like (are) nothing else (...) than ancestors of the robot. The primitives tried to annul death by replicating the human body – we by replacing the human body. Technology instead of mysticism!

(Frisch, Max, 1957: Homo Faber. Ein Bericht; Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1977: 77; translation P.H.)

This passage is not taken as a literary illustration; the radically important part of the statement is the apodosis, easily applicable to digitalisation and artificial intelligence: these “instruments” are not problematic because they replace human intelligence or even human beings, as the plot of many dystopias suggests (*as suggested, for example, in the 2015 film “Ex Machina”, directed by Alex Garland*); the problem is their systematically reduced rationality, defined by (i) dependence on previous input (i. i.e. programming and accessible information) and (ii) being caught in a feedback loop, i.e. being controlled by its previous information and actions. Of course, the same can be said of humans and their intelligence: From the bonds of blind love and trust with parents, learning the first words, falling in love at some point and being able to talk about it (ah, well, chemists, biologists and robots can even explain it) and express (part of) it in words, marriage and over time estrangement from each other, with completely irrational quarrels and accusations, arriving at discussing complicated issues of divorce, complicated financial implications, consequences regarding custody

of children and their future names laid down in a verbose contract... All this and more can be formulated and modelled as feedback loops; in other words, we are also dealing with more or less closed control loops. But the more or less is crucial and often neglected in debates on the subject.

While we find references to the lack of empathy, the impossibility of programming emotions and spontaneous reactions, and the necessity or at least rationality of irrational behaviour,¹² another point is too often ignored – it is the development of what we understand as intelligence and rationality. Again, much has been said about bounded rationality and there is no need to repeat it here, although it is important to keep it in mind. It is also important to keep it in mind as a positive impulse for social and societal action: intelligence cannot be reduced to purely mathematical operations, limited to solving “cagequations”, i.e. equations that are limited in their scope. Intelligence itself is increasingly rationalised and limited in scope.

An interesting example is the evolution of the understanding of writing: the very broad understanding of prose, which encompasses various forms of language, which follows a natural flow, which reflects the natural flow of thought, has been and is increasingly being pushed back behind a representation characterised by some specific formalities: an outline that reflects a general form (abstract, introduction, literature review...) instead of developing an original idea or concept by exploring a topic; extensive provision of references..., in many cases the “novelty” of an argument is pushed back in favour of referencing what is already known and documented. To paraphrase *Donald Rumsfeld*, we might say that prose was originally concerned with exploring the “unknown unknowns – the things we don’t know we don’t know” (*Rumsfeld, Donald H., 12 February 2002 11:30 AM EDT: D(epartment) o(f) D(efense) News Briefing; <https://archive.ph/20180320091111/http://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=2636#selection-401.0-409.30; 05/05/2023>*), whereas today’s prose is concerned – and still increasingly – with exploring things we know or at most those of which we know exactly what we don’t know ... fully or sufficiently.

To sum up, we can conclude that the problems of digitalisation and artificial intelligence are not primarily the increasing dominance of highly intelligent devices; on the contrary, the real danger lies in the anticipatory limitation of intelligence to what can be easily reproduced by querying and compiling existing knowledge and possible logical regrouping.

In the end, we arrive at the good news and the bad news: first, many mistakes that had been repeated, can now easily be avoided; second, however, the progress that had been made by allowing errors and detours, will remain a privilege of the past. Technology instead of mysticism will turn into mystification of technology instead of technical understanding of and operation with myths.

Paradoxically, it means that societies are becoming more and more precarious when following this pathway, because the suggested flexibility and openness is, in fact, a matter of permanently moving in a cul-de-sac.

¹²See Max Weber, seeing bureaucracy as ultimately rational form in a technical sense had been well aware of the limitations of the rigidity of the iron cage; see illustrative *McEwan, Ian, 2019: Machines Like Me And People Like You; New York: Anchor Books*, capturing the rigidity of the pure reason, contradicting at some stage human approaches of justice.