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OVER-CONSUMPTION ARCHETYPE GLOBALIZATION AS A NEW SOURCE OF SOCIAL CONFLICTS AND SOCIAL TENSION

Abstract. The paper presents analysis of theoretical interpretations in the contemporary western sociology the tendency of over-consumption archetype globalization as a new source of social conflicts and social tension. Underlined that active use in the contemporary sociology the concepts “consumer society” and “consumerism” is the scientific reflection of global expansion of the over-consumption archetype as the transcultural model of consumption. Substantiated that modern practices of over-consumption now investigates under analytical context of the consumerism phenomena. According to the author’s position consumerism is the specific style of life and also is the contemporary ideology of universal value of the over-consumption model which becomes global due to arising manipulative influence by technologies of advertising and mass-media.

Keywords: globalization, over-consumption archetype, consumer society, consumerism phenomena, advertising, social conflict, social tension, sociology of consumption.

ГЛОБАЛІЗАЦІЯ АРХЕТИПУ НАДМІРНОГО СПОЖИВАННЯ ЯК НОВІТНЄ ДЖЕРЕЛО СОЦІАЛЬНИХ КОНФЛІКТІВ ТА СОЦІАЛЬНОЇ НАПРУЖЕНОСТІ

Анотація. У статті проаналізовано теоретичні інтерпретації в новітній західній соціології, тенденції глобалізації архетипу надмірного споживання як новітнього джерела соціальних конфліктів та соціальної напруженості. Аргументовано, що активне застосування в сучасній соціології понять “суспільство споживання” та “консюмеризм” є відображенням глобальної експансії архетипу надмірного споживання як транскультурної моделі споживання. Констатовано, що сучасні практики надмірного споживання досліджуються в контексті аналізу феномена консюмеризму. Доведено, що консюмеризм є специфічним стилем життя та новітньою ідеологією універсальної цінності моделі надмірного споживання, яка набуває масового поширення через зростаючий маніпулятивний глобальний та регіональний вплив технологій реклами та мас-медіа.

Ключові слова: глобалізація, архетип надмірного споживання, суспільство споживання, консюмеризм, реклама, соціальний конфлікт, соціальна напруженість, соціологія споживання.

ГЛОБАЛИЗАЦИЯ АРХЕТИПА ИЗБЫТОЧНОГО ПОТРЕБЛЕНИЯ КАК СОВРЕМЕННЫЙ ИСТОЧНИК СОЦИАЛЬНЫХ КОНФЛИКТОВ И СОЦИАЛЬНОЙ НАПРЯЖЕННОСТИ

Аннотация. В статье осуществлен анализ теоретических интерпретаций в новейшей западной социологии, тенденции глобализации архетипа избыточного потребления как современного источника социальных конфликтов и социальной напряженности. Аргументировано, что активное применение в современной социологии понятий “общество потребления” и “консюмеризм” является отражением глобальной экспансии архетипа чрезмерного потребления как транскультурной модели потребления. Констатировано, что современные практики чрезмерного потребления исследуются в контексте анализа феномена консюмеризма. Доказано, что консюмеризм является специфическим стилем жизни и новейшей идеологией универсальной ценности модели чрезмерного потребления, которая приобретает массовое распространение из-за растущего манипулятивного глобального и регионального влияния технологий рекламы и масс-медиа.

Ключевые слова: глобализация, архетип общества потребления, общество потребления, консюмеризм, реклама, социальный конфликт, социальная напряженность, социология потребления.

A problem statement. It is known that among the current issues for which the research efforts are targeted by social scientists, there is a question of the scientific identification of the sources of social inequality, social conflicts and social tension. Factors such as reduction the standard and quality of life, progressive deindustrialization, financial instability, and massive corruption in most post-Soviet countries are significantly influencing the nature of the social relations in various areas of public life, including the field of consumption. Obviously, the creation of effective management techniques aimed at strengthening the regulatory capacity of social institutions in consumption is an important research task. Note that the scientific study by scientists the polarization processes of the social structure of different societies was traditionally linked to the research practices of the functioning of elite social groups, which according to various scientists actually formed a “parasitic class” (K. Marx), “ruling class” (A. Tokville, M. Weber, P. Pareto), “leisure class” (Th. Veblen). It should be stated that the existence of such classes was typically considered from the standpoint of “humanist perspectives” – that is, from the standpoint of the argument that there is a need to overcome various forms of social exclusion, usurpation of material resources and benefits as a latent source of the social apologetics archetype of over-consumption. However, such an understanding at this time does not allow to adequately investigate the newest processes of the transformation and development of consumption influenced by progressive democratization and globalization.

Analysis of the recent sources and publications. The latest scientific areas of study of the problem. It is important to consider that the newest interpretation of the ontological specificity of consumption reflect the research orientation of scientists in understanding the integrative potential of this sector and its role in the organization of the social order. Note that the active introduction to the scientific use such concepts as “consumer society” and “consumerism”, in general, showed the phenomenon of global ontological distribution and approval of the archetype of over-consumption as a trans-cultural pattern of consumption, which was traditionally perceived by scientists as a source of social conflict and social tension. However, the reasons that caused globalization of the archetype of over-consumption scientists interpret in different ways. Thus, firstly, Robert Dahl in his fundamental work “Democracy and its critics” [1] indicates the importance of industrialization and urbanization trends that during the twentieth century stimulated the intensive growth of the middle class, for which the value of over – consumption was a criterion for success in life and the basis of “democratic consensus” of modern polyarchical societies [1, p. 156–162]. Secondly, Ian Shapiro formulates a different conceptual position in his monograph “Political criticism” [2]. Scientist claims that the growth of material prosperity and social well-being of certain social groups cannot be considered as a factor of the overall strengthening of social cohesion of individual and collective actors of social life. He argues that in conditions of a spontaneous development of market economy, people

as consumers of prestige goods in most cases act irrationally, what ultimately leads to various forms of social tension and long-term social conflicts. That is why new challenges are stimulating the modernization process of state social policy as a technological instrument of implementation of regulatory management impact on the social contradictions of the newest practices of consumption in a “commercial capitalism” society [2, p. 270–273].

Thirdly, according to Charles Tilly the process of global distribution of the model of over – consumption is due to the intensification of capital flows from TNCs, and this process leads to increase in the consumer cost of the goods and services, and to strengthen the claims of people in receiving financial assets as a condition of the organization of own consumption, standards of which are constantly changing. Under such circumstances, people are getting new responsibilities for servicing credit loans, and there are new forms of social tension and new social conflicts [3, p. 149–164]. Fourthly, it is important to point out the research of the following sociologists-postmodernists: Z. Bauman [4], J. Baudrillard [5], B. Latour [6], J. Urri [7], that point on the trends in virtualization of the public life and creating global communication networks as the newest conflict triggering ontological stimulus of transformation of modern societies into “consumer societies”. In this connection it is important to emphasize that these “consumer societies”, ontological basis of which is the archetype of over-consumption, according to many scientists is an important indicator of future historical decline of the current global capitalist system.

In view of these circumstances, the **purpose** of this research paper is to analyze the theoretical interpretations in modern western sociology the globalization trend of the archetype of over-consumption as the newest source of social conflicts and social tension.

Presenting the main material. First we should emphasize that the wide use in the modern scientific discourse such sociological metaphors as “consumer society” is possible to explain by the global distribution and massification of such social phenomena as consumerism. Considerable attention devotes to the study of this phenomenon in the modern theoretical sociology. It is believed that consumerism is the most important attributive and visual display of the consumer society.

However, it should be noted that sociologists use the term “consumer society” in largely metaphorical character as definition of the main ontological features of this conceptis incomprehensible. Thus, it is unclear whether *the consumer society is*: 1) universal ontological type of industrial society as a socio-historical system (N. Mackendrick); 2) specific ontological type of locally advanced part of the world capitalist system (E. Fromm, G. Markuse et al.); 3) separate newest phase of the global historical development of postindustrial (information) societies, in which the consumption sector is leading (Z. Bauman, J. Baudrillard, B. Latour, J. Urri et al.).

There is some difficulty in giving a clear answer to these questions as we believe that sociologists use as their argument the types of explanatory discourse, which belong to different scientific fields and traditions. That is why

the use by social scientists the concept of “consumer society” and derived from this concept a notion of “consumerism” requires a more detailed explanation.

Firstly, in a purely ideological sense the term consumerism is a global propagation of an ideology of consumer behavior and lifestyle. This is why some scientists are inclined to consider the concept of “consumerism” and “globalization” as synonyms. Thus, in the work “Consuming life” [4] Zygmunt Bauman defines consumerism as a global ideology *consuming life*, which aims to justify consumer lifestyle and mass consumer behavior. The scientist, in particular, notes that the most distinct feature of the consumer society “is transforming people to commodities” [4, p. 14].

Secondly, it is appropriate to emphasize that the issue of identification phenomenal features of consumerism in many respects remains unclear. However, in purely pragmatic perspective which is associated with processes of social reproduction of consumerism as a social phenomenon, is quite clear the fact that the important principles of conceptual understanding of the essential features of consumerism have two components: 1) the model of over-consumption model and 2) the manipulative influence of advertising.

Thirdly, it should also be emphasized that the study of the causes of global spreading of the model of over-consumption is at an early stage. This whole situation can be explained by the fact that specialized researches of ontological specificity of consumption in terms of identifying consumption patterns in western sociology began only in the late twentieth century. That is why the questions of historical genesis,

and the development of the archetype of over-consumption and its newest manifestation, which is the phenomenon of consumerism, were overlooked by scientists. Obviously, based on their own disciplinary coordinates of the vision of specific economic foundations of the social life, sociology experts form their own conceptual image of consumerism as an object of scientific study.

In the fundamental work of Robin Cohen and Paul Kennedy “Global sociology” consumerism is defined as the phenomenal expression of meanings and values of the westernized lifestyle, which reveals the commitment most of the globalized world. “These meanings are associated with a wide range of cultural beliefs, values and orientations that we share with other people” [8, p. 12].

The ontological foundation of consumerism is a global consumer culture, which according to Robin Cohen and Paul Kennedy, creates two scenarios of global development of consumerism — a pessimistic scenario (perspective of transformation of people as consumers to obedient and passive dopes) [8, p. 318–321] and the optimistic scenario — perspective of approval consumers as romantic creative heroes [8, p. 322–325].

Note that the same position, in our view, shares Grant McCracken, who in a monograph “Culture and consumption” proves the importance of the study of the cultural determination of the phenomenon of consumerism and its cultural contradictions, stressing that this phenomenon is not only an economic process, but a process that reflects the cultural qualities of people as consumers — their skills to evaluate

real functional options of manufactured goods as consumer goods, the availability of their purchase and effective use as objects of material culture. That is why consumerism is not only the economic phenomenon, but also “a cultural consumption process by which goods and services are created, bought and used” [9, p. 1].

Steven Miles at his work “Consumerism as a way of life” also points to the cultural basis of consumerism. He argues that consumerism is a cultural phenomenon that reflects sensitive basis of consumer society, especially the culture and the lifestyle of people in the given society. “The essence of modern consumerism is based on its special feeling. The paradox of consumerism is that it creates a sense of growing individual freedom through the use of economic means for establishing demonstrative extravagant behavior” [10, p. 32].

Of course, if we take into account and focus the analysis on a sensitivity basis of the consumerism culture, as Miles does, then it is easy to come to conclusions of the dramatic nature because consumerism would be seen as a social phenomenon, giving rise to social conflicts and various forms of social tension as the economy of society of global capitalism is impossible without consumerism that generates insatiable consumers inclined to updating behavioral strategies of the over-consumption.

However, it is important to take into account the creative possibilities of consumerism. Note that in the works of Don Slater [11], Peter Steans [12], Methew Hilton [13] are presented arguments concerning the importance of research of consumerism, as a rationally organized social movement, aimed at

protecting the interests of consumers. Thus, in the work “Consumer culture and modernity” Don Slater stresses that consumerism as a sign of postmodern society, occurs as a cultural process of civilized protection of consumers from real and possible fraud of customers [11, p. 126–134]. Peter Steans in his work “Consumerism in the world history: the global transformation of desire” indicates that creative consumerism “seeks to mitigate the social stratification of consumers to “rich” and “poor” [12, p. 11].

In our view, the final determination of the essence of creative consumerism gives Methew Hilton in his work “Consumerism in twentieth-century Britain: a study of historical movement”: “Consumerism is a social movement that is the part of the consumer society in which the active role belongs to consumers” [13, p. 5].

Obviously, that the remarkable fact of this definition is the emphasis of the researcher on an attributive connection of consumerism as a social phenomenon and a social movement of consumers as members of the consumer society. However, this definition from our view is one-sided, as it points to only one of cognitive strategies in studying of consumerism as a social phenomenon.

As shown by our analysis, sociologists are engaged in conceptual interpretation of the phenomenon consumerism on three paradigmatic areas:

1) consumerism is an attributive phenomenon that contributes to the reproduction of the functioning of consumption society as the newest phase of global capitalism;

2) consumerism is a way of life and a specific lifestyle that is marked by pres-

ence of the certain social contradictions associated with the intensification of stimulating the over-consumption and the risks of dehumanization of social life;

3) consumerism is a social movement that aims to protect consumers from real and possible fraud of customers under condition of increasing competition between producers of goods and services, and under condition of the spontaneous development of the global capitalist economy. Note that sociologists give ambiguous answer to the important question: whether consumerism really promotes (as tends to prove Peter Steans) the mitigate of the social inequalities?

Obviously, we should support the point of view of already mentioned works of Z. Bauman, B. Latour and J. Urri, that give a negative answer to this question, pointing that consumerism is a stimulus of formation and establishment of the “new social stratification” by expanding the access to “global mobility”. We should agree with the opinion of the researchers that the modern forms of social inequalities between rich and poor only at first glance are becoming less visible due to the growing influence of the advertising, which creates the illusion of accessibility for all and everyone to the wealth of the modern world.

As the latest manifestation of the archetype of over-consumption, consumerism is an expression of a radical qualitative change in the structure and form of the process of consumption. It is becoming not only a consumption of consumer cost of goods, but the consumption of symbols that are forcing consumers to constantly change goods

that have not lost their consumer value to new groups of goods. That is why the most important technological mean to exercise such coercion is advertising, which today in the public consciousness serves as a substitute for knowledge, moral and ideology. Thus, modern advertising is functionally aimed at ensuring stable reproduction of the archetype of over – consumption and consumer lifestyle.

Analysis of contradictions of the newest practices of such reproduction demonstrates the risks of updating certain typical forms of social conflicts and social tension due to:

- real impossibility of organization of mass consumption of prestigious goods and services;
- increase in the financial debt of various categories of consumers to banks and other credit organizations;
- repressive actions of collectors and bailiffs for the purpose of repaying debts;
- strengthening the manipulative effect of advertising through the use of technological capabilities of modern media and global networks.

Conclusions and recommendations for further research:

1. Today, one of the priority areas of the development of sociological science and an important research objective is creating effective managerial technologies to strengthen the regulatory capacity of social institutions in consumption. The scientific study by scientists the polarization processes of the social structure of different societies was traditionally linked to the research practices of the functioning of elite social groups. Active introduction to the scientific use such concepts as “consumer

society” and “consumerism”, in general, showed the phenomenon of global ontological spreading and approval of the archetype of over-consumption as a transcultural pattern of consumption, which was traditionally perceived by scientists as a source of social conflict and social tension.

2. Engaging in the scientific use the term of “consumer society” marks its amorphous use, as sociologists use it as a sociological metaphor. This is the reason of the ambiguous interpretation and lack of a clear definition of the basic ontological concepts of this concept. However, most sociologists inclined to think that the most important attributive and visual characteristic of the consumer society is consumerism. The process of global reproduction of consumerism as a social phenomenon causes: 1) model of over-consumption model and 2) manipulative impact of advertising.

3. In the modern western sociology the phenomenon of consumerism is interpreted by western sociologists in three conceptual dimensions:

1) consumerism is an attributive phenomenon that contributes to the reproduction of the functioning of consumption society as the newest phase of global capitalism;

2) consumerism is a social movement that aims to protect consumers from real and possible fraud of customers in condition of increasing competition between producers of goods and services, and in condition of the spontaneous development of the global capitalist economy;

3) consumerism is a way of life and a specific lifestyle that is marked by presence of certain social conflicts and

forms of social tension associated with the intensification of the process of global reproducing of the archetype of over-consumption and the risks of dehumanization of social life.

4. Promising for the further scientific development is understanding of consumerism as a specific ideology of consumption. In such a conceptual perspective, consumerism is a modern ideology of universal value of the over-consumption model that acquires mass distribution through the growing manipulative global and regional influence of advertising technologies. The process of global spreading of the archetype of over-consumption is an important consequence of modernization of capitalism as a world system. Attributive component of this process is the tendency to strengthen the virtualization of social life, the development of which leads to increased advertising manipulative influence as a source of social conflict and social tension.

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