

Цифровизация в контексте прекаризации

Digitisation – putting precarisation into context

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Аннотация

Цифровизация широко и вполне обоснованно критикуется за своё вредоносное воздействие на социальное развитие (под которым подразумевается поддержание занятости и социального страхования), часто понимаемое, как отсылка к неортодоксальной политике. Однако, слишком часто такая позиция основана на двух недостатках: а) путанице между техническим измерением цифровизации и её применением в качестве определения бизнес-моделей и б) предположением об обоснованной социально-экономической норме, которой на самом деле никогда не существовало.

Далее основная аргументация развивается в следующем направлении: в капиталистических процессах не развито в полной мере признание социальной составляющей – оставляя в стороне внешний вид, анализ ограничивается индивидуальным капиталом. Хотя это, в очень широком смысле, и принимается (в контексте антагонизма между социальным характером производства и частной собственностью на его результаты), недостаточно развит вопрос: если и в какой мере эта частная собственность на самом деле фактически является вопросом насилия? Оставляя в стороне окончательный ответ, стоит учесть, что как с социально-экономической, так же и с точки зрения регулирования, мы наблюдаем своего рода естественный толчок к более радикальному процессу социализации, идущему рука об руку с процессом цифровизации.

Ключевые слова: цифровизация, прекаризация, сверхпотребление, капитализм, способ производства, социальное качество

Introduction

Norbert Blüm, at the time minister of social affairs, claimed that “one thing is secure: old age pension.” While the development is complex and whereas it may be contested if and to which extent the slogan had been more than a PR-contribution to the general elections to the 11th election period of the Federal Parliament (1987-1990), two aspects remain valid: (i) the slogan had been in fact followed by a general downgrading of the social/welfare state, (ii) leaving the hegemony of the ruling political classes intact. Since then, i.e. 1986,

Abstract

Digitisation is widely – and justifiably criticised – for its detrimental impact on social developments (securitisation of employment and social insurances), commonly understood as point of reference for heterodox policies. However, too often two shortcomings are underlying this view: (a) the confusion of the technical dimension of digitisation and its use as definiendum of business models and (b) the assumption of the validity of a socio-economic normal that actually never really existed.

In the following the main argument is developed along the line that a widely underdeveloped perspective on the process of capitalism is the acknowledgement of its socialising character – leaving aside its appearance and isolating the analysis on individual capitals. While this is in very broad terms accepted (as matter of the antagonistic relationship between social character of production and the private appropriation of its results), it is not sufficiently elaborated if and to which extent this private appropriation is in actual fact a matter of violence. Leaving the ultimate answer aside, it is worthwhile to consider that from both, the socio-economic angle as well as from the regulatory side we are witnessing a kind of natural push towards a more radical process of socialisation, going hand in hand with processes of digitisation.

Keywords: digitisation, precarity, superconsumption, capitalism, mode of production, social quality

much changed: while in reality not much is left from the welfare state, it is still considered to be the fundamental consensus, serving as supposed standard for any changes – even structural changes are defended as improvement of the old gist: the carrots distributed by the social insurance state welded together with a supposedly generous relief system on the one hand, complemented by the stick of compulsory employment on the other hand – the latter understood in very broad terms, for instance encompassing the principle that benefits have to be below the relevant wage.

Indeed, one feels reminded of Charles Dickens' Tale of Two Cities, marking the period by the words:

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way – in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.

A methodological shift, emphasising the political perspective employed by Marx in the Capital, may open a perspective that helps unfolding the potential entailed in the current push of the development of the productive forces. Fundamentally, we have to acknowledge that we are witnessing a process that needs a widened understanding of political economy, going beyond capitalism.

The following aims on providing an outline for such alternative approach to assess digitisation.

1) The contradictory character of the time

Dickens had been quoted – while it is easy to find agreement on such general level, it is apparently impossible to find mutual understanding in a concrete analytical perspective and the assessment of the needed political strategies, even more so, if differentiated perspectives are required. Also, from critical view points,¹ a more or less static and often coarse perspective is taken. However, there is not “one capitalism”, let alone that capitalisms (finance, trade, industrial ...) are only characterised by the main antagonism. Many other fields are open for dispute and disposal, encompassing those that are rooted in the structure of capital and the conditions of the accumulation regime but also in demographic and subjective aspects. The discussion concerning gender is a point in question, generational aspects surely also play a role as do migrant status, ethnical background, religious and sexual orientation etc pp.

All such characteristics are very much social or at most socio-biological constructs, the material side being real and at the very same time not real. A sentence from Hans-Peter Dürr's book, suggesting *New Thinking for a World in Upheaval* may help understanding the truly social character:

¹ I prefer critical perspective, in some respect even directly referring to the «Frankfurt School» – heterodox thinking has its own problematique.

Modern physics now comes to the surprising conclusion: matter is not made up of matter! If we take matter further and further apart, hoping to find the smallest, shapeless, pure matter, there will be nothing left in the end that reminds us of matter. In the end there is no more matter, only form, shape, symmetry, relationship. This realization was and still is very confusing. If matter is not composed of matter, this means: The primacy of matter and form turns around: The primary is relation, the matter the secondary. According to the new physics, matter is a phenomenon that appears only after a certain coarsening. Matter/substance is a coagulated form. Perhaps we could also say: at the end of all the fragmentation of matter, something remains that resembles more the spiritual – holistic, open, vivid: Potentiality, the possibility of realization. Matter is the slag of this spiritual – decomposable, delimitable, determined: Reality [Dürr, H-P, 2010]

While at first glance Dürr's formulation suggests an idealist stance, this is a too narrow interpretation of both, idealist and material. For the very moment and hugely relevant for the present issue it should be sufficient to underline that Marx saw capital as social relation.

In the following two strands will be shown along which real varieties of capitalism have to be elaborated.

First, globalisation means the occurrence of a pattern of asynchronicity which makes attributing generating value and attributing negative externalities difficult. The conceptualisation of value chains is an attempt to allow establishing the principle *each according to his actual performance/contribution*. However, in reality every matter on this level is not least an acknowledgement as well of mutual obligation to fair competition. In reality we are confronted with a systematically continued and perfected system of developing underdevelopment (Frank), leading to poverty chains [Selwyn, B, 2013; Selwyn, B, 2016]. While digitisation and the extreme centralisation stand today as matter of concentrated force, it also indicates that only this way the potential productivity can be relieved. Decisive is, however, not only the appropriation of resources by individuals and individual capitals. More important is the strict competition between different capitalist «interest groups». Centrally we are confronted with a conflict regarding resources.

Traditionally we find the need of an economy to bring two departments into line, in other words it is about relating the production of the means of production (department 1) and the production of consumables (department 2). This had been

extended, beginning with the work by Rosa Luxemburg, suggesting a 3rd department «that of production of the means of exchange It is, indeed, a characteristic feature of this third department that it serves neither the purposes of production nor those of consumption, merely representing social labour in an undifferentiated commodity that cannot be used». [Luxemburg, R, 1913, 99] I proposed to add a fourth department that produces – in particular though not solely by providing services – the social as distinguished, i.e. externalised and separated area of existence. The fourth department is of particular interest as we are dealing with an area that is characterised by an often blurred border between a distinct economic, commodified activity and ordinary social action as it is part of every day's life.

Indeed, the central thesis regarding the current socio-economic development concerns the blurring of borders: in a tentative simple model we can say that department one and two represent the core capitalist area. Department three reflects an area that is not productive and we may say non-capitalist: here we find only the means of helping to make the economy running (and usually overheating, bubbling etc.); and it is characterised not primarily by exchange of equivalents – instead, while it is realising value it is also trying to generate value and this is the realm of cheating, pretension of values, speculation and where violence is probably more pronounced than in other areas [Varoufakis, Y, 2020]. It is a realm that is more depending on politics than others – we should not forget that money is in principle subject to mandatory regulation. It is not by chance that finance capitalism can be found as an early variation of capitalism, providing a kind of seedbed. The proposed department four is characterised by unravelling into the other direction, namely towards direct and unmediated and uncommodified social action – this is said while we witness a current trend that is pointing exactly into the opposite direction of commodifying every single fibre of social life.

Not grounded in digitisation (related processes and structures), however immensely cultivated by it, we find

an overall reshuffling of (a) the mode of accumulation (b) between the departments and sectors and (c) the actors/agencies, and transverse the question of profit versus rate of profit. Linking this to the wider context that defines the changing anthroponomic system we arrive at the following matrix.¹

It is now possible to understand value chains, poverty chains and distribution chains in a more concise way.

2.) Extraction is not production

I suppose not everything we hear is green or social washing though it plays surly a role and is in the meantime systematically developed [Porter M.E., Kramer M.R., 1999, 121-130] and analysed [Planck K, 2017, 203-209]. Besides, there is surely also some ideological change – we may speak of “generational ideologies”. One aspect that should not be underestimated is given by the fact that the borders of both, the economy and the understanding of value change over time: more conscious consumer behaviour have in consequence the effect that at least some strata are ready and able to orient their behaviour according to the so-called post-material values. This has to be seen as part of the objective processes of socialisation: the other (other people, other material forces that could previously be left out of consideration, new processes, even if they are not tangibly close) is increasingly noticeable, objectively and subjectively relevant – even if we cannot influence relevant factors, “it is important to think about them, develop consciousness and concern”. This can be translated into the fact that characteristics of services and goods are not anymore narrowly characterised but what is peripheral to the actual use value, is increasingly considered as being essential and inherent part of the good or service. This is relevant, independent of the form, i.e. valid for commodities, goods of a subsistence economy, public goods or whatsoever.

Putting this into context, we witness a blurring of borders: the value form is to the extent redefined to which reproduction is opening in qualitative terms

¹ Of course, this needs to be applied also in an added perspective of geo-economic entities.

Таблица 1

Прибыль и уровень прибыли

Table 1

Profit Versus Rate of Profit

mode of accumulation		variety of departments and sectors		agencies
socio-economic dimension	socio-demographic dimension	socio-cultural dimension	socio-technological dimension	

and also taking new social forms. We can locate in this context two aspects that are widely discussed, though commonly decontextualised:

- It is the wide array of prosumption [Toffler A, 1970], super-exploitation [Tsing A, 2009, 148-176] and what we may call superconsumption¹ that can indeed be seen in two ways, the factual side obviously proving the colonisation of the life world. Another reading may suggest, however, that these are openings of spaces for (re-)appropriation of the world of commodities and goods by the people – in this light one of the challenges is not primarily about overcoming commodity fetish; instead, it's core problem is the inherent individualist stance.

- Bottom line is that in all these cases two references have to be applied: the one is about the traditional valuation, i.e. the reference to narrowly understood “economic values” in line with the labour theory of value; the other has to go beyond, following the idea of a “political economy of good life” – as such other aspects of valuation are considered. It can be interpreted as non-economic aspects but it can also be seen as a wider understanding of the economy of life.

- Finally and in the present context centrally we find major re-distributions by way of a repartition: although several strong players emerged over the last years (GAFA [Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple] at their centre, related to them a kind of periphery of digital industries consisting of Uber, Airbnb, Deliveroo and the like) a sober and all-encompassing empirical evaluation may even be near-to impossible. At least some pointers are telling:

- many do not have a clear core-business, i.e. in many cases the source of income is not clear and lurching between different areas

- it is quite common that we find frequent moves: acquisitions and repulsions, mergers, adding new performances and combinations, not least reaching out into the real economy (e.g. real transport facilities owned by Amazon)

- the socio-political (self-)obligation of businesses [Lipton, M, 2019]– and the breach of it²

- charitybilisation

- finally it is in this context remarkable that relevant businesses have a relatively low profile as public enterprises: looking at the DAX, none of them is listed while it is a kind of Gruenderzeit-index; looking at the NASDAQ 100, the major players as

¹ Superconsumption is here introduced as proposal for cases of instrumentalisation of consumption and the misappropriation of squares; part of it may be as well the misappropriation of consumables and/or symbols.

² Amazon Jeff Bezos Cuts Health Benefits for Part-Time Whole Foods Workers; https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Amazon-Jeff-Bezos-Cuts-Health-Benefits-for-Part-Time-Whole-Foods-Workers-20190914-0011.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=18; 19/09/2019

alphabet, Baidu, Paypal and the like are listed while importantly the overall picture is determined by more or less traditional businesses.

While moving beyond, it is of some interest seeing Brian Arthur suggesting that “[w]e have entered the distributive era.” [Arthur B, 2017]. Indeed, we are witnessing a multifold competition for shares of value that seems to occur like the phoenix from the ashes:

- It is about the extraction of money for services that are – at least not to the suggested extent – not factually given but only a matter of virtuality

- This is part of a new distribution between different departments and segments of industry but also of different “strata”, be it by way of establishing new businesses, be it franchising, the emergence of a new entrepreneurial class, the precariat or the like – part of this is also about different frames, as for instance the headquarter and any subsidies

- It is not least a matter of profit and profit rate

- Furthermore the debate has to consider the distribution of the decreased marginality rate of production cost and/or increased use value – commonly, Moore’s law is an outstanding example, translating into lowering the cost per unit produced. Putting this into context we see, however, that the increased/improved use value means, in many cases, also a decreasing marginal value in terms of desirability – more or less another expression of the Easterlin-paradox. We may – in the long run – just see it as rebound effect. Subsequently: the permanent fake-innovation, suggesting that a new model has some indispensable features and/or a change that causes compatibility problems, thus making new purchases near-to-unavoidable.

3) 4 x 4 = 1 – Theory of regulation as theory of praxis

A proper understanding of the economic structures and processes requires a complex methodology – especially when we are dealing with structural changes. An extended theory of regulation, referring to accumulation regime, life regime, mode of regulation, mode of living, highlighting the connection between the structure of capital and patterns of consumption [Herrmann P, 2014].

This is only a general framework – a more detailed look at the current change in particular at the accumulation regime: a new form of mass production, a massive contest concerned with a tension between internalisation and externalisation, the first essential for obtaining and maintaining control, the second instrumental to reduce cost. Characteristic is that in this light we can determine following major classes of digital industries:

- the sphere of investing excess capital/destruction, devaluation of capital

- the sphere of standard investment
- «hub-investment»
- attempts of free-riding/копиркат-инг

It is a general pattern that a good part of the investment stems from external sources and/or takes the form of cross-financing. Also we find new forms of interdependence for which reliable empirical research is not yet undertaken and where it is questionable if relevant data can be made available. Of utmost importance are not least the dependencies in the framework of so-called value chains and with this a hidden oligopolisation: for car manufacturing it is known that only a very small number (depending on the source it is 10 or 16) suppliers are delivering the parts for the entire car-manufacturing industry.

Of special relevance are, of course, the sphere of investing excess capital/destruction, devaluation of capital and «hub-investment». Whereas the first is a matter of the general crisis – the process of enforcing some balance between supply and demand, the third is concerned with the relationship between different departments and sectors. We can speak of a violent adjustment of the profit rate via changes in the accumulation regime. As much as the accumulation regime depends on and (re-)produces specific patterns of consumption, as important is recognising the complex shifts between individual capitals but equally between the addressees or customers – this is on the one hand the final consumer, and on the other hand the wide array of customers buying goods for further processing, their small trades and crafts; in addition the entire retail sector – the latter not least characterised by the discounters entering high-street.

The question of hegemony and the meaning of the consumer/user is often underestimated, deserves, however, special attention in connection with the change of an accumulation regime, considering that the correspondence between production and reproduction of the wage earner is not only a matter of goods produced, services available and power but also a matter of the rules of the reproduction, including the «mental rules» and ingrained behavioural patterns of the consumer citizen. In other words, we have to make sense of the interplay of the various dimensions – usually omitted, while only the individual (f)actors are seen in their isolated right and meaning.

Importantly, productivity, products and values are “fraying” at the ends: while on the one hand decisions are increasingly considered by individuals as their own, individual decisions, they are as such increasingly «social» and «political». After society had been killed by Thatcher and Co., it is now “re-joined”. Also relevant is a specifically charged form of advertisement – a recent trend of explicitly quasi-identifying shopping (of groceries) with explicit political symbolism (e.g. Aldi in Germany, 2017; [Campillo-Lundbeck S, 2017]; Billa in Austria Autumn 2019; Easyjet advertising «affordable old buildings», which, against the background of an accommodation crisis, gains a specific meaning beyond advertising flights to Athens, Madrid and Sevilla).

In a recent publication [Herrmann P, 2000], I highlighted another aspect: the market, directly replacing politics by way of voluntarily anticipated privatisation.

Also relevant is that decisions concerning certain purchases are replacing political decisions – purchasing health service or relevant health insurance appears for many easier and more effective than politically engaging in demanding public health provision – the latter requiring more engagement and also being contingent in its outcome; the result of obtaining a public high-speed internet provision may be cheaper than its purchase on the market while engaging and in addition such public provision would also have positive effects on social distribution and thus democracy; however, in the short-term for the individual choosing insurances, service provision and provider on the market seems to be more opportune than going through the tedious process of political engagement, the latter in addition hampered by an uncertain outcome [Streeck W, 2015]¹

The apparently homogenous block of a set of central players of the digital industries is in this wider context recognised as part of a historical contest for hegemony, the parameters shown in the following matrix.

¹ Streeck, Wolfgang. Panel discussion on “Neoliberalism in the crisis - 2015, May 22” URL: <https://youtu.be/UYjH4lOn1sw>; 31/08/18: minute: 56.41).

Матрица регуляторного подхода

Таблица 2

Matrix of Regulationist Approach

Table 2

FIELD OF ACTION I socio-economic factor	NORMATIVE FIELD I Integration from the top
FIELD OF ACTION II 'subversion/escapism/adaptationism'	NORMATIVE FIELD II local and subculture

This reflects the regulationist approach with the four dimensions as suggested by the present author, namely accumulation regime, life regime, mode of regulation and mode of living.

4) Remix of production

However, this will only be possible if we understand the economic processes that – at least for the time being – led to change of the entire socio-economic fabrique. Therefore it is suggested that the core issue is the exploitation/appropriation/utilisation of the emerging new socio-technological aspects of labour as metabolism between human beings and wider nature. Part of these changes are redefinitions in the following two dimensions:¹

- Production, consumption, distribution and exchange had been outlined by Marx as cornerstones of the material process. It had been clearly outlined as totality. If we apply the notion introduced with reference to Dürr and interpret this as dynamic process, it opens the door to another interpretation. The new combination is at first sight a matter of the technical shifts. It refers, however, also to a substantial redefinition of the product and production. Marx, in the beginning of the first volume of *The Capital*, limits his analysis by stating 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 K., 1867, 45]. Going beyond looking at ”those societies”, aiming on assessing the wealth of societies, we should start not by looking at the single commodity as Marx had to do. Instead, looking at the Wealth of Nations or even more at wealth of humankind the

¹ There are others, in particular those that are changing productive processes technically – these are not considered here.

perspective changes. In slight variation of the famous phrase from the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, we are now ventilating the meaning of «From each according to his ability, to society according to its collective development». In other words, while we are still taking an economic perspective, this is now not starting from a limiting interest of one class; instead, the orientation is directed towards generating societal value which is not least the value of enhanced relationships and the relevant managerial and organisational infrastructure. The emphasis that all economy is the economy of time gains in this light special meaning as the time gained is only seen as such if and when it is gained as freely disposable time. While Marx concludes for his political economy of capitalism that the «investigation must therefore begin with the analysis of a commodity» (op. cit.), the political economy of a sustainable and just world economy² has to start from the production of the availability of freely disposable time.

That includes turning away from indicator systems as GDP, GDP plus (as proposed by the Commission on the measurement of economic performance and social progress) or happiness-reports; also of little help are attempts to establish liveability assessments.

- More suitable are orientations on a different concept of productivity and output – Frigga Haug’s 4 in 1 reflection is centrally meaningful as is the Social Quality approach. The first is looking at four pillars, constituting an alternative assessment of “productivity”, namely traditional wage labour, reproduction, culture and politics from below [Haug F, 2009, 119-123]. The social quality approach is founded in the reference to constitutional, conditional and normative factors as dimensions of the social quality – these are outlined in the following.

² This surely needs to be defined

Таблица 3

Конституциональные, условные и нормативные измерения социального качества

Table 3

Constitutional, Conditional and Normative Factors as Dimensions of the Social Quality

constitutional factors (processes)	conditional factors (opportunities + contingencies)	normative factors (orientation)
personal (human) security and resilience social recognition and self-worth social responsiveness personal (human) capacity or self-efficacy	socio-economic security social cohesion social inclusion social empowerment	social justice (equity) solidarity equal value human dignity
to be added: eco-conscience	to be added: eco-reality	to be added: eco-equilibrium

[International Association on Social Quality, 2018; Van der Maesen, Laurent J.G., 2012].

Second, capitalism in strictu sensu, should be limited to the process of exploitation of labour power, subsequent to the commodification of labour power and the related equality of market actors. With this, we find as well the strict limitation of capitalism as a system that is based in the sphere of production – even if consumption, distribution and exchange are inherently part of this understanding. Here, production is very much about the making of goods and the provision of services, usually directly linked to interpersonal relations, personal needs and/or the linking of people and conditions. An interesting additional perspective comes from a very broad definition of capitalism, given by Joe Brewer in a small piece titled *This Is How Capitalism Actually Works* [Brewer J, 2016]. He states: «Here is how capitalism actually works – use a legal framework of private ownership to extract value from the labor of others. The end game is a system that hoards wealth, stifles innovation, and ultimately destroys the value created by cooperation among those who seek to do things that cannot be done alone». While this is in some respect detrimental opposite to the mainstream critique of contemporary capitalism – the notion of neoliberalism as broad brush sweeping the rule of law away – both approaches are similar in respect of a one-sidedness, suggesting that capitalism is a “contradictory system without contradictions”, i.e. without considering that many contradictions are cutting through the different and distinct classes. Indeed, the challenge is to understand the remix of the entity of production, consumption, distribution, and exchange as political-economic relationship, concerned with the complex «system of life».

Oskar Negt emphasises

If, therefore, the legal categories in statu nascendi can be examined in any area of society, it is primarily that of production, the concept of which is gained from and coined by the production of goods in an unfolded barter society, but which by no means can be confined to the periphery of technical rules and instrumental action. In Marx's work, production always also refers to the production of real life, of ideas, conceptions, of consciousness, that is, of life contexts that invent and simultaneously permeate the material activity and material intercourse of human beings, the language of real life. ("Communism is the production of the form of transport itself.") With the production of material goods, people simultaneously produce and reproduce the conditions that determine the rules and limits of their actions and behavior [Negt O, 1973]

This reflects as well Friedrich Engels' contention that

(a)ccording to the materialist conception, the determining factor in history is, in the last resort, the production and reproduction of immediate life. But this itself is again of a twofold character. On the one hand, the production of the means of subsistence, of food, clothing and shelter and the implements required for this; on the other, the production of human beings themselves, the propagation of the species. The social institutions under which men of a definite historical epoch and of a definite country live are determined by both kinds of production ... [Engels F, 1884, 131-133]

Here, we can add the third realm the production of life – relations, possibilities and contingencies with the various decisions taken. All of these are products and while some are actually in tendency commodified, such commodification is at the end a fake one: psychological support, symbolic acts and purchases are not really replacing or compensating for the lack of real social relations and individual development.

5) Contest between giants and dwarfs

From what had been stated, it is obvious that we are centrally dealing with a contest that is at its very core geared towards hegemony concerned with (a) sectors and departments and (b) different formats of actors and action. It is suggested to distinguish three distinct layers, namely

- The surface level, where precarity appears as ill-development of market mechanisms and mal-treatment by individual political and entrepreneurial decisions
- The level of competition between enterprises
- The shifts – nationally and globally – concerning capital groups (i.e. departments) and the emergence of new structures of accumulation and potentially the establishment of a new accumulation regime, subsequent to and subsequently the development of new forms of reproductive citizenship.¹

Throughout history we see major developments being paralleled by and even founded in pathbreaking inventions and the application of new productive forces. In this context the model of Kondratieff-waves and reference to the Schumpeterian entrepreneur are heuristically helpful. In one way or another all these developmental pushes meant a bursting of the given level of productivity. As long as this had not been compensated by a multiplication of the production and/or a diversification of production and migration

¹ The term reproductive citizenship is an auxiliary in order to grasp the connection between the conditions of production and the re-production of the wage earner.

of workforce, it meant unemployment, often enough encompassing diverse pressures on the employed. Especially the latter can be seen as inclusion of formerly well integrated strata into the group of the excluded – it is today frequently discussed as insecurity and poverty reaching the middle of society.

This battle for the relative position is centrally concerned with the formation of the general rate of profit which is also a specific form of socialisation and social redistribution. Thus, it is not the technology as such; instead, competition determines the way of application, that means the attempt (a) to be the first using the new means and (b) to maintain this advantage as long as possible, thus acting in a sphere that is factually contradicting the theory of value: at last the maintenance as extraordinary profit means that the actor actually moves outside of the economic law and uses non-economic force. Aggressive monopolist market strategies, speculation, at most semi-legal lobbying but also the aggressive politicised, missionary political performance and bypassing local legislation and the claim of new community building ... - these are today's "business models", aiming at establishing monopolies, disrespecting social- and labour law but also accepting temporary losses and non-profitability with the aim of medium- and long-term outcompeting others and reshaping structures. Decisive is a double structure, the one leg established as centralised capital, the other leg consisting of a wide network of medium-, small and not least family enterprises, acting as multipliers, ambassadors, cheap labour, and potential suppliers of innovation that may be acquired in order to be fully integrated or that may act independently as a useful add-on. – Economically of special interest is that the process of corporation of society takes a rather new form: while we are confronted with new mammoth-entities – they are this in terms of market control, turnover etc. while small when it comes to the number of employees – we find in parallel • new and extended forms of (inter-)dependencies, consisting of long chains; • often feverish developments, in general shorter life spans of enterprises; • relatively new entrepreneurial forms (as franchising, outsourcing, re-sourcing ...) becoming prevalent; finally • the increasing role of new «methods of production», namely the utilisation of data.

Having mentioned the move towards outside of the economic law requires to recognise the linked move towards an extra-legal state. The practices of the new players are often reminding of premodern, pre-legal states, often justifying to speak of little empires and principedoms: googleplex, apple park, the appearance and impression (meant in a near-to-literal understanding) of Apple Stores like that in Dubai are just a few visible turnpikes of a world of a Plutocrats that define power in a new way [Freeland Ch, 2012].

Conclusion

Approaching digitisation – and of course what had been looked at can only be part of the entire field – in a wider perspective, we see at the very core a major push of socialisation. Though in a perverted way, the entire field – beginning from the understanding of value over the productive forces to the productive process and even the understanding of what production and productivity means – shows the increasing societal character. The two pillars are the blurring of borders: (i) the productive process is not anymore limited to manufacturing goods in commodified forms/for commodification; (ii) the reference to resources to be used and consequences/impact of what is produced. Against this background it is problematic to refer (only) to the well-known patterns of a capitalist "market" economy with the supposed (though rarely realised) full(time) employment-based economy, securing the Wealth of the Nation. While we are witnessing undeniably major scandals and attacks on workers' rights, the welfare state etc., the real issues have to be located on a different level, requiring more radical approaches. Two points are to be mentioned at first instance:

- Descandalisation – it is not primarily about a strategic affront directed against the working class and a hollowing-out of the middle classes. While this is a consequence with severe restrictions for the social fabric and the individuals concerned, the core of the problem is the shift of the capital structure.

- Demystification is needed instead of an analysis that is tainted by the transfiguration of the legend of a welfare capitalism that never really existed. And in a similar vein there is little meaning in blaming individuals, establishing a conspiracy approach around their (mis)behaviour.

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