Eugenia UDANGIU,
University of Craiova
Faculty of Law and Social Sciences

CREATIVITY AND THE PRESSURES OF CONTEMPORARY WORLD

Literature review

Keywords

Forms of sociality
Adaptation
Creativity

Abstract

The close and direct interaction within tribal societies gave rise to a "mechanical" solidarity or, in other words, a solidarity based on similarities (precontractual solidarity). Direct and constant supervision of individuals in the small groups determined the internalization of norms, given that the social changes were very slow. With the increasing number of individuals and "dynamic density", a new form of solidarity aroused: the organic solidarity or a solidarity based on differentiation. The communities became weaker and weaker and the dynamic of social life has increased so much that people have no longer the necessary time to internalize the changes. Consequently, these changes remain more or less external to our own subjectivity. Under these circumstances, creativity is not only a solution for economic growth but also a reservoir for possible better worlds.

1. Introduction

Sociality describes the manner in which societies are structured through individual interactions. These interactions include, to varying degrees depending on the type of the dominant culture, rational elements, emotional, conscious and unconscious elements which are expressed in the whole formal and informal assembly of social norms.

The binder that enabled people to live together and create different forms of sociality, was named solidarity. Throughout history, Emile Durkheim (1922/1992) identified only two types of solidarity: the pre-contractual one (mechanical solidarity), specific to communities and the contractual one (organic solidarity), specific to societies.

Close and direct interaction in tribal societies gave birth to "mechanical solidarity" based on similarity. The small number of individuals, the face - to - face interaction and the direct and continuous supervision of the individuals by the group, led to the *internalization* of norms, so that the community as a whole is reflected in the individual's subjective structure. Therefore Durkheim said that mechanical solidarity is one by similarity. That's why the predominant behavior and the specific type of sociality was the cooperative one. The base of interaction was mainly affective. With the increasing number of individuals and the increase of "dynamic density" a new form of solidarity appeared: the organic solidarity or the solidarity through *differentiation*. Communities weakened and this gave way to the development of individual consciousness. Human face - to - face interaction decreased and the mediated one became predominant. At the same time, the challenges and the dynamics of social life increased and people had no longer the necessary time to internalize the changes. These remain more or less external to the individual subjectivity. Individual consciousness expanded, common consciousness declined. The specific type of sociality is the competitive one. The base of interaction became predominantly rational.

This was the most important creative adaptation of sociality and sociability that enabled people to build up large assemblies of interaction and face the new challenges.

2. Social inertia: novelty as a threat

Vilfredo Pareto (1917/2007) wrote that with the advent of a minimum collective consciousness, a need for uniformity started to manifest, a need to have predictable behaviors and thus to increase the discipline and the group security. An extreme form of this need is neo-phobia, i. e. novelty regarded as a threat to the group cohesion.

Mutations occurred in the report between individual and collective – conscience and especially modernity with its strong confidence in

Reason and its benefits, determined the individual emancipation and an avalanche of social changes that many have felt as threatening.

A classic of conservatism, Michael Oakeshott (1962/1995: 24-35, passim) analyzes what he believes to be *the rationalist style* of the Enlightenment and its fixation for novelty. He believed that these excesses were due to the lack of culture of the followers of Rene Descartes and Francis Bacon. So, here is a portrait of The Rationalist and not one of a rational person:

- he is a perpetual rebel, an enemy of simplistic tradition assimilated to prejudices, an enemy of simply, ordinary behaviors, questioning any authority except the authority of his own reason;
- he is a skeptic because he always evaluates critically any opinion, convention or cultural element usually inherited; paradoxically, he is also an optimist, with unshaken confidence in his ability to determine the truth of an opinion or the appropriateness of an action;
- he owns the monopoly of a clear and honest thought, suspecting those who oppose him and do not have access to the same kind of virtues;
- he has a gnostic intellectual profile, so that he does not recognize the mysteries and uncertainties of life, looking only for order and clear boundaries;
- his intellect is like a "neutral tool, well-tuned" but his spirit is just "trained" not "educated", content with the training in a field of technical analysis and neglecting instruction; his intellectual processes "take place in a vacuum" because he does not have the sense of the experience that gathers; the only valid experience for him is the one that "can be converted in a formula";
  - in social policy, he leads to perfection and uniformity because he is convinced that all rational preferences necessarily coincide.

As a theorist of conservatism, Oakeshott properly captures the rationalist excesses but at the same time he made a rational critique of the Zeitgeist. We do not need to see here only the desire to preserve the status quo ante, but also the painful experience of the collapse of a world in confrontation with sudden changes. Because in fact, this is all about change and about how rapidly it occurs. The speed is a key variable because when it is too high, it does not allow a gradual adaptation and may cause individual and social trauma. People lose the sense of control over their lives, the fear of unknown appears, the existential anguish, the anxiety as a permanent state of excitement, the loneliness. The functional solidarity promoted the

competitive behaviors at the expense of the cooperative ones and thus has determined the "run" after the change. But this "run" leaves little time for a critical analysis and so, rationalism seems to be turning against rationality.

3. Postmodern society and the "cloudy" sociality

Multimedia techniques, electronic highways and the digitalization of information are considered indisputable signs of cyber revolution or of the new "computerized civilization." Post-materialist, postmodern and deconstructive or whatever labels may be used for the new "meta-narrative", it certainly announces a "new world" that will change the interaction relationships between people, giving rise to new forms of sociality. Here are some postmodern features, as Cărtărescu (1999) described them:

- *indeterminacy* refers to the philosophical abandon of "knowledge's foundations" and to the rejection of "grand theories", scientific and ideological meta-narratives, putting all these "language games" on an equal position;
- *fragmentation*, means that the world is viewed in the light of differences as ontological legitimacies; no unified vision of existence is any more possible;
- *de-canonization*, means the rejection and deconstruction of any cultural style that tends to become dominant, and therefore potentially oppressive, threatening the ideal of "equality in difference";
- *the lack of self* or the lack of depth, is leading to a "flatten existence"; the postmodern art is presenting itself as "post-humanistic";
- the perception of life as *ephemeral and precarious*, as a sequence of contingencies without any specific meaning;
- *irony and perspectivism* are considered as the only possible attitudes to meaningless existence and its lack of depth; perspectivism attacks any authority with claims to universality, and the irony is exercised in a ludic approach of any traditional themes;
- *hybridization* leads to the democratization of art by increasing the direct participation in genres such as happenings, body art, land art (environmental art), graffiti, art on the computer, etc. (see also Sgourev and Althuizen, 2014)
- *constructionism*, means the "production" of illusory, fictional, utopian worlds; it occurs as a consequence of the lost sense of reality, time and history; Vattimo (1993) named it "de-insertion".

In the new postindustrial world, "knowledge is and will be produced to be sold, is and will be consumed to be used in a new production" (Lyotard, 1985/1993, p .26). The macro-level decisions will be less and less influenced by the grand narratives but will focus on logical and pragmatic criteria. The old political actors – state, nations, parties, professions and institutions will be gradually substituted by "a composite blanket of heads of enterprises, senior officials, managers of large professional bodies, trade unions, political and religious organizations." (idem, p.36)

So programmatically varied, the postmodern world seems to be the ideal place where everyone can create a personal world based on specific needs. Those with communitarian nostalgia can live in voluntary communities that offer order, safety and the sense of control over their lives. Those who feel good in a fluid, changeable and challenging milieu, the virtual communities seem to be sufficient. We have at this time the simultaneous presence of the two types of sociality and, moreover, a third form characterized by a very high mobility and weak social ties emerges. Lyotard metaphorically calls it "clouds of sociality." (see also Elliot and Frickel, 2013)

These clouds condense around "temporary contracts", cheaper and more flexible, which will replace the already weakened institutions of the professional, emotional, sexual, cultural, familial, political, international domain. Although the nation-states, institutions and historical traditions will survive only to the extent in which they become weaker, individuals could become stronger if they will gather in communication networks' nodes. These networks will constantly change, but within the networks the individual is not completely powerless: he can move from the language game in which he is employed and this "movement", understood as innovation will be tolerated by the system within acceptable limits, or will be even encouraged if it will increase the system performances.

Conclusions

We are dealing with two major changes: giving up the idea of the foundation of knowledge and of the great, universalist narratives, on one hand, and the recognition of the difference as ontological foundation, on the other hand. These two changes require creativity as a fundamental resource for adaptation and survival in a far greater extent than in earlier periods.

In such a society, Richard Rorty wrote (1989/1998), feelings of solidarity are expressed mainly by concerns that the world of the person next to you shall not be affected or destroyed. Solidarity is built now, on the base of "common danger", on the refusal of cruelty manifested as humiliation of the others, and on the ability of imaginative identification with the pain of the people close to you. Common dangers (poverty of food and water resources, atomic weapons, overall terrorism, global heating) could create a general mobilization to potentiate human solidarity but at the same time, they generate negative emotions such as: loss and sadness, fear, anger , shame,

disgust, anxiety, expressed in millenarian mythologies. (Minulescu, 2009)

In Rorty's utopia, discussions on public affairs would gravitate only around two issues: how to balance the need for peace, prosperity and freedom in the conditions under which one of these needs has to be sacrificed for the benefit of one of the other two; how to equalize the chances for self-creation and then people "to be left alone to use or ignore" these chances. This would be the entire social glue that society needs.

From a political point of view, democracy is dynamic and cretive because it has at its core the tension between liberty and equalty as opposed values. At the same time, liberal democracy is a self-regulator system: it allowes people to push the conservative brakes if they need time for adjust and critical thinking, or to run to the possible futures.

References

[1] C rt rescu, Mircea 1999, *Postmodernism Românesc [The Romanian Postmodernism]*, Ed. Humanitas Bucure ti

[2] Durkheim, Emile 1922/2001, *Diviziunea muncii sociale [The Division of Social Labour]*, Albatros, Bucuresti

[3] Elliot, James ; Frickel, Scott 2013, "The historical Nature of Cities : A Study of Urbanization and Hazardous Waste Accumulation" in *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 78, No. 4, pp. 521-543

[4] Lyotard, Jean – Francois 1985/1993, *Condi ia postmodern [The Postmodern Condition]*, Edit. Babel, Bucure ti

[5] Minulescu, Mihaela 2009, „Archetypal Energy and Globalization" in *R&D Perspective*, Dobrescu, P., Pricopie, R., Ionescu, M. (eds.), Comunicare.ro, Bucuresti

[6] Oakeshot, Michael 1962/1995, *Ra ionalismul în politic [Rationalism in Politics]*, All, Bucure ti

[7] Pareto, Vilfredo 1917/2007, *Tratat de sociologie general [General Sociology Treaty]*, Beladi, Craiova

[8] Rorty, Richard 1989/1998, *Contingen , ironie i solidaritate [Contingency, Irony and Solidarity]*, Ed. All, Bucure ti

[9] Sgourev, Stoyan; Althuizen, Niek 2014, <<"Notable" and „Not Able": When are Acts of Inconsistency Rewarded?">> in *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 79, No. 2, Stanford University Press, pp. 283-302

[10] Vattimo, Gianni 1993, *Sfâr itul modernit ii [The End of Modernity]*, Ed. Pontica, Constan a