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SELF-IDENTIFICATION OF PRECARIAT REPRESENTATIVES

This article is devoted to the self-identification of precariat representatives. The study on the identity is relevant due to the fact that for precariat, which lives in total instability and uncertainty, such factor of stabilization is much more important than for other social groups. The purpose of the article is to delineate self-identification features of precariat representatives. A cross-methodological approach has been used to achieve this purpose, including: systemic, comparative methods; method of synthesis and generalization of materials presented in the scientific literature on the researched problem. The main defining characteristics of precariat have been disclosed, including the lack of the work-based and occupational identity. It is concluded that the lack of work-based and occupational identity makes it more difficult to form a class consciousness of precariat, which, in turn, impedes the establishment of precariat as a “class-for-itself”. Nowadays, the formation of identity is often replaced with self-branding. Self-branding, however, does not contribute to the formation of stable self-identification that may be helpful in stabilization of social positions and removal of instability and uncertainty. It often leads to replacing people with things they buy and money they earn instead of identification with certain profession. The formation of precariat representatives’ self-identification is important to remove the uncertainty and instability, thus, to solve the problems of anxiety inherent in precariat. The studies on this problem can influence the economic and political spheres. The following studies on self-identification of precariat representatives in Ukraine is also relevant because it can help to understand the specificity of this class and its manifestations in our country.

Key word: *precariat; self-identification; work-based identity; money; self-branding.*

Introduction

In the era of globalization, the social structure is changing radically. The emergence of new forms of employment results in formation of new classes, including precariat, distinguishing which as a separate social stratum still appears a subject of researchers’ debate. There are many studies on this issue, authors of which try to cover different aspects of the precariat as a new phenomenon. In spite of many existing studies, the issue of precariat representatives’ self-identification still remains insufficiently covered.

In contemporary world, adaptation mechanisms and contexts are important for people to be a part of society where they live and to feel secure in globalized world. This necessitates forming elements of stability that can help a person to navigate the world. The identity serves as a certain support and guidance for people in their lives. It shows who people are and which group they belong to. In case of precarity, the study on the identity is relevant due to the fact that for precariat representatives, who live in total instability and uncertainty, such factor of stabilization is much more important than for other social groups. Precarity deprives people of possibility to have long-term plans and of need to think about reputation based on work achievements and behavior. Needing money and being in a state of unemployment and

overemployment at the same time, precariat can hardly rely even on themselves without having a stable idea about who they are. This may also cause problems for other social groups which interact with precariat in economic, political and social spheres.

Thus, the purpose of our research is to delineate self-identification features of precariat representatives.

The precariat as a social group that arises, increases quantitatively and changes qualitatively in the context of the global structural crisis, has attracted the attention of researchers around the world in recent years. Increase in the number of precariat can cause a danger to social stability. The precariat concept has been articulated P. Bourdieu (*Jönsson, 2012*). It has been comprehensively studied by G. Standing (*2011; 2014*), who has defined its main features. The self-identification started to be considered thanks to E. Erickson (*1996*). Identity issues have been revealed by Z. Bauman, J. Fearon (*1999*), K. Walsh and J. Gordon (*2008*). The self-identification of precariat representatives and its features has not been sufficiently covered.

Methods

A cross-methodological approach has been used, including: systemic, comparative methods; method of synthesis and generalization of materials presented in the

scientific literature on the researched problem. The use of mentioned methods has contributed to understanding the state of self-identification of precariat representatives. Systemic and comparative methods have been used to systematize the theoretical materials on precariat as a new class and specific features of its self-identification. The synthesis and generalization have allowed to reveal these features and delineate the issues of self-identification of precariat representatives.

Results and discussion

The neologism “precariat” is an amalgam of “precarity” and “proletariat” (Schierup., Jørgensen, 2016). However, historically, the word “precariat” can be found long before the emergence of the “precariat” concept in modern sense. Thus, in Roman law, a precarium was a specific loan institute. In modern civil law system, this term can also be found. Its meaning, as well as meaning of its derivatives, has changed, however, it still refers to the property rights sphere (Kasap, 2016).

The “precariat” concept in the modern meaning was articulated by P. Bourdieu in the 1990s. In a lecture in 1997, Bourdieu asserted that “the precariat is everywhere”, observing that insecure and short-term jobs are becoming more common, making life itself insecure, restless and hard to plan – in a word, precarious (Jönsson, 2012). M. Foucault, J. Habermas, M. Hardt and A. Negri, and H. Arendt are also considered intellectual founders of this concept. It has further been explored by J. Butler, whose treatment of the notion delves into our understandings of self-sovereignty (and its lack) and suggests a communal approach to nonviolence that encourages a repositioning of not only our ethnic and racial frames, but our human ones (relative to nonhumans) (Banki, 2013: 2). The precarity situation today is largely caused by unstable employment and income. At the same time, precarity does not mean poverty: more often, the precarity phenomenon is ascribed to those whose income is within a certain medium range, not low enough for slipping into poverty but at the same time not sufficient to build up savings for several months ahead (Gasiukova, Shkaratan, 2019: 119).

G. Standing's book “The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class” is considered one of the fundamental works on precariat. In this book, as well as in subsequent works and interviews, Standing outlines basic features of the precariat and describes dangers related to it.

Standing (2011) tries to define precariat and claims that “the precariat is a class-in-the-making, if not yet a class-for-itself, in the Marxian sense of that term”. He contrasts precariat with a class named “salarit”, which is characterized by full-time employment and stable position in society. The salariat is concentrated in large corporations, government agencies and public administration, including the civil service. On the contrary, there is no such concentration of precariat, it is spread much wider in the labor market.

In his book, Standing identifies three main features of the precariat:

- the absence of production relations, though many members of the precariat have never seen their employer, do not have professional self-identification;
- a waste of more resources for lower pay;
- specific relations with the state and society, lack of social guarantees and assistance from state institutions (Standing, 2011).

However, the researches which criticize Standing's approach, state that such features do not show the difference between precariat and proletariat, so there is no ground for distinguishing a new class. It is mentioned

that Standing describes only characteristics that are not inherent in precariat, and does not describe its separating features (Biriukov, 2015). To cope with this, in further researches, Standing provides more details on defining characteristics of the precariat. Thus, he distinguishes the following:

- distinctive relations of production, because the new norm is uncertain and volatile labor, which leads to insecurity and the absence of labor protection;
- distinctive relations of distribution, or remuneration; as lack of paid vacations, medical leave, company pensions and rights-based state benefits, linked to legal entitlements;
- distinctive relations to the state, as the precariat lacks many of the rights provided to citizens in the core working class and salariat;
- lack of an occupational identity or narrative to give to life;
- lack of control over time, which means that the precariat cannot demarcate life into blocks of time – it is expected to be available for labor and work at all times of the day and night;
- psychological alienation and work for money, not for “happiness” or social status etc.;
- a very low probability of social mobility;
- over-qualification;
- a peculiar combination of forms of insecurity;
- a combination of poverty traps, exploitation and coercion outside the workplace, so-called precarity traps (Standing, 2014);

Standing emphasizes that that there is not only precariatization of work. The impact of precariatization on mind and behavior is also dangerous. He claims that the Internet, browsing habits and social networks change the way people think, damage long-term memory and lead to problems with focusing on tasks and learning. The precariat suffers from information overload without a lifestyle that could give them the control and stability (Standing, 2011).

Standing argues that the precariat displays “anomie, anger, anxiety, and alienation” in the face of contemporary politics (Lazar, Sanchez, 2019). He describes the realization of these “A's”. Thus, anger comes from the frustration at the seemingly blocked avenues for advancing a meaningful life and from a sense of relative deprivation, anxiety comes from a chronic insecurity, fear and permanent stress, when people are “underemployed” and “overemployed” at the same time; alienation arises from doing work for others, and is exacerbated by the reaction of the society on their work. Anomie comes from a listlessness associated with sustained defeat, compounded by the condemnation lobbed at many in the precariat by politicians and middle-class commentators castigating them as lazy, directionless, undeserving, socially irresponsible or worse (Standing, 2011). The described state of precariat representatives complicates the search for self-identification. It influences not only on relations with the state and society; it makes it difficult to form the self-image and image of other people. Thus, precariat as a social group suffers from a lack of self-identification, which is emphasized by Standing in his works.

Individuals are not born with identity. It develops through the social interaction. Self-identification and identity problems became a point of scientists' interest in the late 20th century. Any cultural, political, economic, national problem is often considered through the prism of self-identification today. It is particularly important in addressing issues of modern social classes.

The "identification" started to be considered thanks to E. Erickson (*Erickson, 1996*), who introduced the expressions "identity", "identity crisis" into scientific circulation. These terms remain relevant today.

Interest in these problems is connected to the growing pace of human life, when the globalization of life, the transformation of the world and human relations, pluralism in all spheres of life lead to increased human search for their own "I". In an unstable world, a person feels the need for guidance and certain landmarks, which can be found only by defining one's own identity. In the past, the search for identity did not cause particular difficulties. Today, observing the course of events, a person simply does not have time to form clear boundaries of the personality.

According to Z. Bauman, currently there is a lack of such patterns, codes and rules that can be chosen as stable guidelines and which can be followed later. This does not mean that our contemporaries are guided solely by their own imagination and determination and are free to choose a way of life out of nothing, or that they no longer need to take building materials and drawings from society to build their lives. This means that we are now moving from the era of predetermined "reference groups" to the era of "universal comparison", in which the purpose of human efforts to build their lives is hopelessly uncertain (*Bauman, 2008:15*). Therefore, for the inhabitants of the "liquid modernity", the identity is constantly changeable, it covers various spheres of life and is determined in all human activities.

A person seeks identity as a certain support in life, as a certain model of behavior, or collects it from scattered pieces of identification. For a person living in a world of intense ideological and social motivations, the process of identification solves many problems of the individual, and through them – of the society itself: a person finds an existence identical to its essence; gets the opportunity to solve the problem of loneliness and historical continuity (*Sitkevich, 2011:149*).

The term "identification" is used in various scientific areas and in each of them it is defined. In a more general sense, identification (from Latin "identificare" – to identify) is the assimilation, recognition, coincidence of objects. Identification is one of the most important mechanisms of socialization of the individual, which is manifested in the identification of the individual with a certain group or community (nominal or real, large or small, etc.) (*Gritsanov, 2003: 400*).

J. Osborne defines self-identification as "the extent to which an individual defines the self through a role or performance in a particular domain". In other words, self-identification refers to the extent to which a person considers the domain in question to be an important and defining part of who they are (their self-concept) (*Chu, Schlegel, Quek, Christy, & Chen, 2017: 111*).

Identification can be considered in two basic senses: social and individual identity. In the first sense, "personality" belongs to such a social category as a group of people defined by a certain "label" and rules that determine a person's membership in the group, its characteristic features or attributes. In the second sense, as a feeling of personal identity there is a certain distinctive characteristic that a person is particularly proud of (*Fearon, 1999*).

However, R. Jenkins disputes the essential difference between social and individual identity. He proposes an approach in which collective and individual identity are considered as similar in important respects, because the individual and the collective identities are routinely entangled

with each other and both emerge within interaction, and the processes by which they both are produced and reproduced are analogous (*Jenkins, 2004: 15-16*).

Today, the "identity" term is used in the following aspects:

1) as a social category determined by the rules of belonging to the group and its characteristic attributes and behavior;

2) as socially distinctive characteristics that a person perceives as a point of pride, as constant socially conditioned features or as both aspects at the same time (*Fearon, 1999*).

In the latter sense, the "identity" is a modern formulation of dignity, pride, or honor that is indirectly associated with social categories.

Outlining different aspects of the use of the "identity" term, we should understand its complexity. Identity is manifested in ideas about who people are. It is used to describe how groups and people mutually define each other on various grounds (race, ethnicity, religion, language, culture, etc.).

Identity reflects how individuals and groups form social relationships with other people and groups. Identity is a source of actions which cannot be explained by biophysical laws. It arises as a certain unregulated space or unresolved issue in this space, between several ordinary discourses, that is, as an interaction between "I" and "not I", in which there is a division into "us" and "them".

Individuals create their self-identity through first comparing themselves with one another and then classifying themselves and others into different social groups. In doing so, they attach value to these categories. Thus, their social identities represent individuals' sense of both belonging to and differentiating from their community and culture. Social groupings enable individuals to distinguish themselves as different from out-group members, yet at the same time as similar to their other desirable in-group members. Through social identity, individuals make sense of their social environment, as well as locate a place for themselves within it (*Walsh, Gordon, 2008*).

Identity has multiple components. Collectively-held identities that mediate our experience of power and structure can also include smaller groupings of eclectic affinity or belonging, such as sub-tribes. As such, identity encompasses aspects that are the result of agentic action on the part of individuals to participate in activities associated with a specific identity. Identity can be deliberately crafted and pursued, even in contexts where such identity has to be earned and bestowed by others. Work-based or occupational identities are specific fields with clear power relationship, but also include occupations that individuals are drawn into or pursue in agentic ways (*Piercy, 2018: 16*).

Talking about the problem of precariat representatives' identity in general, Standing notes the following: "...varieties of the precariat have different entitlements and a different structure of social income. It feeds through into the issue of identity. Natives can display multiple identities, legal migrants can focus on the identity that gives them most security and illegals must not display any identity, for fear of being exposed". He describes the main problem of the identity of precariat representatives, namely: lack of work-based and occupation identity.

Work identity is conceptualized as a multilayered and multidimensional phenomenon that describes one's self-concept and one's understanding of it in terms of one's work role. K. Walsh and J. Gordon defined individual work

identity as a work-based self-concept constituted of a combination of organizational, occupational and other identities that shape the roles individuals adopt and the corresponding ways they behave when performing their work in the context of their jobs and/or careers. Work-based identity (part of individual self-concept) has a significant influence on employee behavior, which in turn has an impact on work outcomes. This implies that the work-based identity of the collective labor force has an indirect but nevertheless significant impact on organizational performance (Bothma, Roodt, 2012).

The lack of work-based identity is caused by the following factors. As Standing notes, being employed, the precariat is "in career-less jobs, without traditions of social memory, a feeling they belong to an occupational community steeped in stable practices, codes of ethics and norms of behavior, reciprocity and fraternity". The precariat cannot feel part of work community, which results in the intensification of alienation which is inherent in them. The precariat does not build long-term relationship in their professional activity. Actions and attitudes, derived from precariousness, drift towards opportunism. Thus, there is no need to think about own behavior or morals because of feeling of unstable, unpredictable future.

Standing states that in the past, a typical worker changed only a few employers by the time he retired, so it made sense to identify with the firm in which a person was employed. Today, a person can anticipate having nine employers before reaching the age of 30. In such circumstances, it is much harder to form an occupational identity; moreover, there is no need in it because it would be changed with the frequently changing work (Standing, 2011). There is also no need in work-based identity due to the fact that a person changes not only the place of the employment, but also the area of work. Moreover, the education does not solve the problem of self-identification absence. Nowadays, people often get a job which is not connected with their education and qualification, so they do not identify themselves with the learned profession.

The danger of such lack of self-identification lies in the following. As it was mentioned, the work-based identity has a great impact on organizational performance. So, its absence may lead to deterioration in the quality of work of such employee. It is also impossible to form stable work environment and team with employees not interested in establishing themselves as representatives of this group/organization.

Precariat representatives often replace work-based self-identification with so-called "self-branding". Branding as a phenomenon has changed in the mid-twentieth century, when consumer markets became more fragmented and products began to be valued as much for their capacity to signify identity as they were for their utility. In this context, brands became less about the products themselves and more about the emotional connection between consumers and brand identities. The concept of self-branding scales this process down to an individual level. Rather than promoting one's skills and abilities, individuals construct and promote a consistent, marketable, and ostensibly authentic self-image in order to develop relationships that can be leveraged for economic opportunities, thus instrumentalizing affective relations in the process of developing a "reputation" (Whitmer, 2019: 3). Identity has thus become something more like a task: an open-ended and unstable campaign waged on one's own (Duffy, Pooley, 2019). Such self-identification of people with brands created around them produces the value transformation and the change in

attitude towards people's behavior and actions. Self-branding results in identifying people with their pages in social networks, products they buy and image they create. A person loses own "self" and replaces it with things and money. Self-branding does not contribute to the formation of stable self-identification that may be helpful in stabilization of social positions and removal of instability and uncertainty.

The lack of work-based and occupational identity makes it more difficult to form a class consciousness of precariat, which, in turn, impedes the establishment of precariat as a "class-for-itself". The fragmentation inside the precariat and its focus on themselves, self-branding and money earning complicate the formation of community, which could defend its rights and fight against alienation and anomy. There is still no such identity as "precariat" or "precarious worker". Its formation seems hardly possible because of the absence of uniting characteristics. Precariat representatives can be divided into categories and groups, however, it is not enough to cover all differences between them. At the same time, the creation of such identity could help solving a part of precariat representatives' problems. The formation of common self-identification may deal with anomie and anxiety, make it more possible to struggle for rights and social mobility. It may lead to recognition of precariat as full members of society, same as salariat representatives.

Conclusions

The identity is manifested in ideas about who people are. It describes people's and groups' interrelation and the division of people into "us" and "them". Today, the "identity" term is used in the following aspects: as a social category determined by the rules of belonging to the group and its characteristic attributes and behavior and as socially distinctive characteristics that a person perceives as a point of pride, as constant socially conditioned features or as both aspects at the same time. In the latter sense, the "identity" is a modern formulation of dignity, pride, or honor that is indirectly associated with social categories.

During the study on the precariat self-identification, the specific features of precariat as a new class have been revealed. The lack of identity differs precariat from other classes, including proletariat, which formed the proletarian identity.

Precariat lives in conditions of permanent struggle for stability and resources. There hardly is the possibility to form a class consciousness or stable identity in such situation. However, the formation of it is important to remove the uncertainty and instability, thus, to solve the problems of anxiety inherent in precariat. The studies on this problem can influence the economic and political spheres. The following studies on self-identification of precariat representatives in Ukraine is also relevant because it can help to understand the specificity of this class and its manifestations in our country.

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САМОІДЕНТИФІКАЦІЯ ПРЕДСТАВНИКІВ ПРЕКАРІАТУ

Статтю присвячено самоідентифікації представників прекаріату. Дослідження питань самоідентифікації є актуальним, адже для прекаріату, який живе у стані постійної нестабільності та невизначеності, ідентичність як фактор стабілізації є значно більш важливою, ніж для інших соціальних груп. Мета статті – визначити особливості самоідентифікації представників прекаріату. Для досягнення поставленої мети був використаний крос-методологічний підхід, зокрема системний та компаративний методи, синтез та узагальнення матеріалів, представлених у науковій літературі з цієї проблематики. Визначені головні риси, що виокремлюють прекаріат серед інших класів, включаючи відсутність професійної та трудової ідентичності. Авторами зроблено висновки, що відсутність професійної та трудової ідентичності ускладнює формування класової свідомості прекаріату, що, в свою чергу, унеможливорює формування прекаріату як «класу для себе». Сьогодні, формування самоідентичності часто заміщується селф-брендингом, однак, селф-брендинг не сприяє формуванню такої самоідентифікації, яка б могла стабілізувати суспільні позиції і сприяти боротьбі з нестабільністю і невизначеністю. Селф-брендинг призводить до того, що ідентичність людини часто підмінюють сторінками у соціальних мережах, речами, які люди купують, і грошима, які вони заробляють, замість ідентифікації з професією та діяльністю. Формування самоідентифікації представників прекаріату є важливим, адже може сприяти боротьбі з невизначеністю та нестабільністю, і, таким чином, вирішити проблему тривоги, притаманної прекаріату. Дослідження цієї проблематики може вплинути на економічну та політичну сферу. Подальші дослідження самоідентифікації представників прекаріату в Україні є актуальними, так як можуть сприяти розумінню особливостей цього класу і його проявів у нашій країні.

Ключові слова: прекаріат; самоідентифікація; професійна ідентичність; гроші; селф-брендинг.

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