

Social Sozophilosophy and the Care for Sustainability of Some Areas of the Social Reality

Sozofilozofia społeczna i troska o zrównoważony rozwój niektórych obszarów rzeczywistości społecznej

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Abstract

In Anthropocene, the natural and social environment of human life has been degrading more significantly than ever before, especially for the past 70 years. The negative changes of the natural environment are well known and clearly felt. Therefore, the environmental awareness usually refers to the degradation of nature as a result of the human engineering activity. Due to their economic, political and ideological activities, people are aware of the degradation of social, cultural and spiritual environments to a much lesser extent. They distort the functioning of social systems and their sustainability, worsen the interpersonal relations, and devastate the personality. Hence, the issue of social environment protection, taken by sozology – complementary to the eco-philosophy – is crucial, as is the sozophilosophical reflection about it. The article presents threats to the sustainable development of selected fields of the social environment – knowledge, faith, social space, freedom, privacy, social time, and work – as well as their causes and possibilities of reduction.

Key words: social environment, ecophilosophy, sozophilosophy, sustainability

Streszczenie

W epoce antropocenu przyrodnicze i społeczne środowisko życia człowieka ulega degradacji o wiele bardziej niż w poprzednich epokach, zwłaszcza od około 70 lat. Negatywne zmiany środowiska przyrodniczego są powszechnie znane i wyraźnie odczuwane. Dlatego świadomość ekologiczna odnosi się przeważnie do degradacji przyrody w wyniku inżynierskiej aktywności ludzi. W o wiele mniejszym stopniu ludzie zdają sobie sprawę z degradacji środowiska społecznego, kulturowego i duchowego w wyniku aktywności ekonomicznej, politycznej i ideologicznej. Zakłóca ona funkcjonowanie systemów społecznych i ich zrównoważony rozwój, pogarsza relacje międzyludzkie i pustoszy osobowość. Dlatego ważna jest kwestia ochrony środowiska społecznego podejmowana przez sozologię i związana z tym refleksja filozoficzna w ramach sozofilozofii, która jest komplementarna do ekofilozofii. Artykuł ukazuje zagrożenia dla zrównoważonego rozwoju wybranych obszarów środowiska społecznego – wiedzy, wiary, przestrzeni społecznej, wolności, prywatności, czasu społecznego i pracy – oraz ich przyczyny i możliwości redukcji.

Słowa kluczowe: środowisko społeczne, ekofilozofia, sozofilozofia, rozwój zrównoważony

1. Anthropocene – a drastic imbalance in the environment

People, like any other living beings, live at the expense of their environment. By taking food, air, water, and other components, they destroy it. Thus the devastation of environment is the natural and

inevitable process that is proportional to the growth of population and to their comfort of life. In the past, no attention was paid to it at all, because there were less people in the world and the degradation of environment was an insignificant danger for them. However, the situation changed drastically when a new geological era started, which was

called Anthropocene by Paul Crutzen, a Dutch Nobel Prize winner, an atmospheric chemist and meteorologist. In his opinion, this era occurred as a result of:

- Growing urbanization.
- Rapid depletion of non-renewable energy sources (fossil fuels).
- Progressive contamination of the environment by various types of waste, toxins, greenhouse gases, etc.

Earlier, it was thought that this era dates back two hundred years.

Later, different dates were proposed depending on the scientific discipline, and which criteria were assumed in determining the dates when people first started to significantly shape the Earth's ecosystem (Smith, Zeder, 2013). Presently, Jan Zalasiewicz – senior lecturer of palaeobiology at the University Leicester – suggests, that Anthropocene began on July 16, 1945, when the US army conducted the first tests of nuclear weapons in Alamogordo, New Mexico (Zalasiewicz, 2015).

Since the mid-twentieth century, when people possessed an extraordinary power to destroy and to handle powerful energy sources thanks to the knowledge and technological development, environmental degradation began to increasingly threaten people and raised serious concerns about their status and survival. Then, various environmental organizations and mass social movements related to environmental protection emerged. Their activity increases along with the environmental contamination. Some economists, politicians and environmentalists, so-called *eco-pragmatists*, oppose them. They argue that human ingenuity and technology can overcome the limits of our ecosystem and skip the turning points (critical moments) in its development and that such environmental actions do more harm than good to the environment. They follow the controversial rule that technology can fix any damage it has done. Most environmentalists do not agree with this. For instance, Clive Hamilton, professor of ethics at Charles Sturt University in Canberra, believes that eco-pragmatists make the fatal mistake of believing that humanity is able to create a *good* Anthropocene. Indeed, the term *Anthropocene* was clearly defined negatively by its creator P. Crutzen. It is in fact the era of sole environmental destruction by humans, whose detrimental impact on the global environment is comparable with the most destructive forces of nature. However, despite this, eco-pragmatists accept this new geological era as a chance for humanity. For example, US experts in the field of environmental policy, Michael Shellenberger and Ted Nordhaus promise that by the end of this century the life of people will be healthy, free and creative (Shellenberger, Nordhaus, 2009). In their opinion, there is no need for any pro-ecological action or environmentally-friendly economics and politics, for that to

happen, but rather the further development of the technology and its modernization. Their view corresponds to the interests of conservative politicians, and Anthropocene is compatible with the contemporary liberal system (this is one of many examples of calming public opinion by the ruling elite in a situation of a real threat). Opponents of the environmental movement argue that the ideology of environmentalists can be summarized in three words: limit, reuse, renew; in other words, everyone should settle for the least. However, such reduction of needs would inhibit further economic growth as well as technological and civilizational development, and the majority of people living in wealth do not want that (Smallman, 2014). Therefore, mankind stands before a serious dilemma: either not to interfere in the course of events – let everything go on as before (which will lead to a collapse with a high degree of probability – to the self-destruction of our and other species) or do something to prevent it. The first option corresponds to the views of presentism and is good for only one – the current – generation, which wants to live in the best possible conditions, and does not care about the fate of future generations. It calms their conscience, provides the psychic comfort and delegates responsibility for the future of mankind to something indefinite. Should it be this way? Should not the current generation care for the chance of survival for the next generation and for the future of the human race and act sensibly and responsibly? After all, the care for the future is somehow encoded in the survival instinct of all living beings. Do people – intelligent beings – have to act contrary to this instinct and replace it with a calculated economic rationality and continue to modify the nature, not always wisely? Then as Richard Heinberg, an American journalist and educator, predicts *nature will finally do it for us by very unpleasant means: famine, epidemics, war* (Heinberg, 2014). Unfortunately, as of yet, economy still dominates over ecology. It probably will keep its advantage as long as the ideology of consumerism, focused on continuous and unsustainable economic growth and on the unlimited multiplication of profit and wealth, will rule and as long as people fooled by it will worship the omnipotent god Mammon.

2. Degradation of the social environment is as dangerous as the one of natural environment

Environmental awareness regarding the natural environment is sufficiently developed, but not always and not everywhere reflected in the pro-ecological behavior of people in their daily life. However, few people realize that the social environment is also degraded much faster and to a greater extent than natural, and that the effects are no less harmful than in the case of the degradation

of natural environment. Even the Catholic Church, represented by Pope Francis mainly deals with matter of natural environment threats. This is reflected, for example, in the message about the spring workshop, organized by the Vatican Academy of Sciences in 2014¹. People underestimate every day matters of degradation of their environment, if they do not touch them directly, because *in general, they do not realize in the full extent the danger and the possibility of a real disaster. The awareness of total threat, which approaches quickly and is not delayed by anything and anyone, reaches only a few people. The vast majority live in an incomplete awareness of it, they remain in a state of semi-conscious realization about its sinister approximations and destructive force or they only have selective knowledge about this process – mainly owing to the mass media which are generally unprepared* (Szmyd, 2004, p. 14).

Several reasons for this nonchalance in relation to real and unavoidable threats generated by the degraded environment can be pointed out. One cause is psychological; on the one hand, people are very reluctant to relate to threats, because they prefer to think about pleasant things, rather than about unpleasant ones. On the other hand, they willingly delude themselves thinking that there will be no environmental disaster and that people were scared by many apocalyptic visions not once in the history, and therefore they trust the eco-pragmatists. The second cause comes from the insane pace of life –

there is no time for philosophical reflection, in particular, to thinking about the distant consequences of environmental devastation. The third cause is the intentional stupefying of people and the developing of presentivist thinking focused on *here and now*, rather than futuristic thinking focused on *there and then*. Here, the important role is played by mass media, which are subservient to the ruling elites, insatiable in their greediness and in the pursuit of getting rich at any cost.

3. Philosophy of the environment

Not many people are interested in environmental issues in a broader sense, i.e. in the philosophical aspect, and in the context of increasing environmental threats which have impact on the future of humanity. Thinking in terms of the philosophy of the environment, *ecophilosophy* in short, is spreading to a limited extent. These issues are studied by ecophilosophers, who deal with practical applications of philosophy rather than with speculations. The starting point for their thinking was the increasingly knowledge about the deteriorating state of the environment. The data provided by specialists indicate increasing and alarming devastation as well as toxication of the natural environment, which hampers the proper functioning of humans, animals and plants, posing a serious threat to their lives. Since this separate subdomain of philosophy has appeared, many books, dissertations and articles were written, which present and popularize its achievements. Many seminars and conferences on its issues took place. Ecophilosophy could consolidate quite quickly thanks to the involvement and achievements of researchers. It has already got its own history and extensive structure. However, it is not interested in protection of the environment, although ecophilosophers sometimes also discuss this matter, but their main subjects are deliberations about the relationship between man and his natural and social surroundings. While philosophy of the environment (ecophilosophy) grew up on the ground of ecology, the philosophy of environmental protection was created on the basis of zoology, which deals with issues of environmental protection. Unfortunately, few people have heard that such science exists, what it deals with, what is its purpose, and what it is used for. Recently, I began developing the philosophy of environmental protection and I called it *sozophilosophy* (see Sztumski, 2014). This name is completely new.

Sozophilosophy develops gradually from the stage of an idea to the stage of implementation: it has already exceeded the *statu nascendi* and the *statu potentiae*, but it is still in the *statu crescendi*. Therefore, it is impossible to present it fully or in some ordered form or system, but rather in the propaedeutic form. Sozophilosophy and ecophilosophy are separate but complementary parts of phi-

¹ Pope Francis, as well as 58 scientists and clergymen from around the world participated in this workshop. In the final communiqué it is mentioned, among others, that the measure of GDP, previously used as the main indicator of economic development is incomplete, because it does not include, amongst others, the condition of the environment. *The massive use of fossil fuels by the power sector deeply disturbs Earth's climate and acidifies oceans. Warming and extreme weather conditions associated with it have reached unprecedented levels, affecting the life of our children, while 40% of the poorest, who have a minimal role in the generation of global pollution, probably suffer the most* – wrote the signatories of the appeal, calling, among others, to develop renewable energy sources and reduce dependence on fossil fuels. Participants of the meeting, Partha Dasgupta and Veerabhadran Ramanathan, presented a list of the most important problems in the journal *Science*, which may be solved with the help of Vatican. They are very specific. The authors, an economist and oceanographer, note that a well-developed network of religious institutions can mobilize the public opinion, organize effective actions and rapidly reach those who need the most. As one example, they provide activities that both reduce the dependence of the poor on the dirty technology and improve the environment: *Humanity needs to reduce emissions of methane, ozone, soot, and fluorocarbon, which are currently generated during production of up to one third of the heat energy. Certain pollutants are emitted due to deep poverty. Majority of the 3 billion poor people situate themselves at the bottom of the 'energy pyramid'.*

losophy of the environment. Both should mobilize people to reflect on the state of their life environment, protect it, and make their efforts to stop further devastation of it.

Contemporary social environment became peculiar due to the accelerated development of Anthropocene, huge progress of knowledge and technology, and rapid growth of population. It is quite different than those present in the history of mankind. Its peculiarity is the consequence of the following phenomena, which intensified in recent decades:

- Excessive destruction of nature;
- Rapid degradation of social environment;
- Growing social space condensation;
- Increasing pace of life;
- Diminishing ability to foresee the forthcoming events;
- Increased risk;
- Escalating web of various types of network;
- Increasing chaos and decomposition in its structure.

All these phenomena imply increasing threats for proper functioning, of people, for their health and life in today's social environment.

4. Progressing degradation of social environment

In principle, all areas of culture in our social environment degrade progressively and rapidly. Relationships and functioning of institutions are perturbed and degenerated. Our language is becoming increasingly vulgar. Traditional ethical and aesthetic canons and values depreciated. Legal and educational systems break down. Traditional authorities, family and morality lose power. The ways, forms and means of communication are increasingly primitive despite the improvement of communication technology. These phenomena are quite well-known, experienced every day and therefore, we do not pay attention to them. Unfavorable changes in the social and cultural environment are reflected in the internal environment of a man. This environment consists of personality, psyche, consciousness, spirituality and personal culture of a man as well as his bodily structure.

Degraded social environment affects negatively the physical and mental health of people. Degradation of personality and psyche manifests itself in:

- the loss of empathy;
- spreading intolerance, hostility, conflicts and moral dilemmas;
- shaping of egoistic and individualistic attitudes (Nees, 2015);
- mass imitation of machines (robots);
- reduced critical thinking and rationality;
- vulgarization of language;
- deepening psychological discomfort;

- limited common sense due to the increasing thoughtlessness and stupidity²;

Disproportion between the good and evil in different spheres of life, which contributes to their unsustainable development, is growing in the degraded social environment. The most endangered spheres of social life and social environment, which I call *the landscapes of social reality*, include: knowledge, faith, social space, freedom, privacy, social time, acoustic environment, language, education, politics, ethics (axiological sphere), reason, and dignity. Predominance of negative phenomena increases everywhere. Consequently, the degradation contributes to the deepening imbalances in all areas of social reality. All social landscapes are threatened by unsustainable development.

In this article, I limit myself to showing the events that lead to disharmony, internal contradictions and destruction, thus defying the idea of sustainable development, only in a few landscapes: knowledge, faith, social space, freedom, privacy, social time, and work.

5. Degradation of the environment of knowledge

Knowledge is the driving force of many human activities, especially the cognitive ones. It has always been an effective tool in the struggle for existence and survival. Therefore, it is constantly developed and increasingly appreciated. However, its development also causes well-known negative effects, and it is accompanied by internal contradictions that contribute to the degradation of science. Firstly, the development of human knowledge does not provide greater security, but rather increasingly threatens his or her health and life. As knowledge progresses, the number of lifestyle diseases, which are difficult to treat, increases as well, including: stress, cancers, allergies, etc. Moreover, increasingly complicated devices are produced. Despite various safety measures, they are more and more prone to breakdowns, even resulting in ecological disasters. Secondly, the products of knowledge – discoveries and inventions – alienate, like other products of people's activities. Therefore, they transform into instruments which are no longer controlled by their creators. Eventually, these are used not only for the good purposes, but also for the wrong ones – such as destroying and killing. Appealing to the conscience and responsibility of scientists does not help much. Application of knowledge for a wrong purpose does not depend on them, but rather on those who implement it. As Einstein wrote: *The*

² *Stupidity is a phenomenon that we encounter everywhere in the human environment, in all of its many forms. It is a mass phenomenon. Despite all the efforts, stupidity will remain a faithful companion of man through history* (Reutterer, 2005).

responsibility falls on those who make use of the new tools, and not on those who contribute to the advancement of science, and therefore on the politicians, not the scientists. Thirdly, in a market economy we have to deal with commodification, commercialization and privatization of knowledge. Political and financial elite have appropriated knowledge. This contradicts the essence of knowledge, because it should be the common property of the whole society. The market economy has made harmed knowledge by making it a commodity for sale. Commodification of knowledge contributes to its depreciation and to the declining trust in science, as a result of unreliable knowledge acquisition, falsification of data, biased interpretation of the theory and corrupt scientists. Lying and deception thrive in science. Additionally, knowledge becomes increasingly expensive; we have to pay for the acquisition, development and success in research. Not every person and not every country can afford it. The poor are left only with mass education, which is at an increasingly lower level. This contributes to the mass stupefying of people.

5. Collapse of faith

Faith is a relatively autonomous component of culture and an important part of the social environment. It has a significant impact on the attitudes, actions and personality of people and on the relationship between them. Throughout the history of mankind it has played an important role in the life of individuals, communities, and nations. Everything seems to indicate that its importance will continue to increase. A specific network of relations of mutual trust – interpersonal and institutional forms thanks to the faith. It is also an essential component of the external and internal spiritual environment. For this reason, one ought to prevent its degradation. It should be the subject of research for ecology and social zoology. There is a place for faith within the system of environmental science; ecology of faith and zoology of faith are two closely related, but separate subdisciplines of environmentalology. The object of the zoology of faith is the protection of faith in secular and religious dimensions, as well as the protection of the mutual trust from the harmful effects of the civilization of lies and the ideology of consumerism, which generate distrust, hostility, hypocrisy, and limit the spiritual world.

Faith means trust, confidence and belief in the truth or validity of one's own or other people's judgments, opinions, evaluations and proceedings which do not need a proof. It also means trust in someone or something, regardless of whether it is a physical object – a concrete, tangible, accessible to the senses, or immaterial – abstract, invented, designed, imaginary or fantastic. Thus understood faith is the foundation, which supports the identity of social

groups and their community. Along with the social progress, faith complicates and modifies; it changes its subject, the way of experiencing and of manifestation. Degradation of faith, like in the case of other components of contemporary cultural environment, progresses with the development of Western civilization. This occurs mainly in the countries developed both economically and in regard to civilization, with a high level of consumption and quality of life. There, people gradually lose their faith in what has previously been sacred and indisputable for them: the gods, leaders, great ideas, authority, ethical values, science, politics, standard slogans etc., and, finally, in the meaning of the world, the possibility of taking effective actions, controlling their own destinies, lives and themselves. Symptoms of losing faith occur in different spheres of social life. These include the growing skepticism, significant (or even complete) lack of trust in individuals, groups, elites, organizations, institutions and social systems.

6. Degradation of the social and individual space

The concept of physical space is commonly understood and it is easily defined on the basis of various sciences. It is usually understood as all the events, processes and phenomena which surround us; they occupy specific places and they are in certain distance from each other. We imagine it as a three-dimensional space, because people are able to perceive so many dimensions directly through their senses (in subatomic physics there are spaces of over a dozen dimensions; however, we are not able to directly experience them with our senses). People transform physical space into social one through various activities. Hence, the social space is like a hyperspace constructed on the physical space, but it differs from it substantially. First of all, it is a space typical for meso-world, where the sizes of the objects are comparable to the size of human. Physical interactions or geographical conditions have a lesser influence on the geometry of the social space than social, cultural, demographic, psychological, and other conditionings. The objects of the social space objects include people (individual and communities), institutions, organizations and products of knowledge, technology and culture, which – when present in the materialized form – simultaneously, also belong to the physical space. In short, social space includes humans, products of their activities and social relations. Social space is much more dynamic compared to the physical space, because society changes much faster than nature, and their pace increases proportionally to the progress of civilization. Two values are important for the social space: social distance and social density. Social density is expressed by the number of its various components per unit of area: people, institu-

tions, organizations, and inter-institutional relationships, communication and transportation networks, buildings, symbols, etc. Social distance is the physical or geometrical distance felt due to the time needed by people to communicate with each other and with other components of the social space. It is reduced along with the shortening of time required to traverse it or to make contact with other people. While the physical space is a product of nature, the social space is a product of people and culture. Social space is like a scenography introduced to the physical space, shaped by cultural factors, in which people develop their activity. Social space is multi-dimensional. The number of its real dimensions corresponds to the number of types of interactions between objects in it, that is, the number of areas of human activity. These areas are subject to gradual degradation – mostly under the influence of rapid industrialization, commercialization and growth of population. Due to the growth of population, the social space becomes denser and the social distances are reduced. These unfavorable effects are experienced especially by residents of megacities, where the social distances are shortening. These negative effects occur because of:

1. More frequent conflicts of interests between individuals and groups.
2. Increasing danger of staying in them.
3. Difficulty in managing them.
4. Greater susceptibility to breakdowns.

Public space – one of the components of the social space – degrades as well.

Organization of public space is generally unpunished and arbitrary, and for various reasons, it meets with discontent. The devastation of the virtual space and media space, which are parts of the public space, is a separate matter.

Degradation of the social space in urban areas occurs to a greater degree. Soon, there will be more of them due to a mass influx of people to the cities. This may cause an *urban disaster* because:

1. Crime in cities grows proportionally to their population.
2. Management of a megacity is very difficult. Various elements of their infrastructure are dysfunctional, especially the transport.
3. Physical and mental health of urban residents deteriorates due to toxins and smog.
4. The feeling of enslavement intensifies as a result of reducing free living space of the individuals.
5. Architecture of big cities overwhelms people.
6. Individuals feel uncomfortable being in a crowded big city.
7. Mixing of different cultures and sub-cultures, languages, religions and habits, particularly as a result of growing global and mass transmigration, weakens their identity; the population of the city is a disintegrated and highly dynamic system in which everything – residents,

shops, infrastructure, etc. – changes increasingly faster and more turbulently.

8. Cities become similar to each other and thus, less distinguishable, along with the progress of globalization and of the mixing of cultures in them.
9. The phenomena of architectural boredom and architectural dissonance are characteristic for megacities.
10. Life in a degraded social space becomes increasingly arduous every day. Therefore, preventing further degradation of the social space, or at least preventing the destruction of the remaining un-degraded fragments is an urgent task, so that the future generations could enjoy them.

7. Reduction of freedom – a neo-slavery

One can be free, i.e. behave, think and act as one wishes, only within the limits set by the dependency relationships and mutual conditions between people. This is true even if our sense of freedom is based on something perceived as free will. Besides, the existence of free will is a controversial matter. However, new research in neurophysiology of brain increasingly confirms the belief that everything that affects human decisions, including those of the *free will*, is determined by the structure and functioning of the brain and central nervous system (Müller, Schmidt, 2011). No one is born free, but gradually becomes free during his biological and social development thanks to the participation in the socialization process. Standards, sizes, borders and areas of freedom of an individual are established during the life in a community. As a result, they realize their own freedom, i.e. they acquire the sense of freedom and they can use it. The need to be free comes from the mere fact of life and from the instinctive desire to survive. This requires decisions and actions which oppose the threats. One can only act effectively when one is free, and with force that is proportional to the degree of freedom. Freedom can not only be felt subjectively in different ways, but also measured objectively, e.g. using the number of choices that can be made in a given quandary: the more alternative choices, possible decisions the exits there are, the higher the degree of the freedom is. Objectively measured degree of freedom does not always coincide with its subjective perception. Various factors limit the degree of freedom; above all, the external prohibitions from his natural and social environment, as well as the ethical imperatives of his consciousness. The number of prohibitions established by nature practically does not change; instead, the number of the prohibitions increases rapidly in the social environment, proportionally to the progress of civilization. Freedom is a multi-dimensional feature; therefore, one is free only in some of them. There are as many

dimensions of freedom as there are spheres of life or areas of human activity: thinking, learning, creativity, technology, production, economy, politics, religion, culture, art, science, communication and so on. Therefore, discussion about *freedom in general*, without any reference to a specific sphere of activities, is idle and has no practical sense.

Man as a social being is subject to pressure from other people, groups, organizations, institutions, laws, rules and different standards resulting from interpersonal relationships, co-existence, and co-operation in all areas of social life – economy, politics and culture. This pressure increases, and so does the enslavement by social factors. It increases proportionally to the desire of having more freedom which was, is and will be the leitmotif of political, economic, and cultural activity. Its power and efficiency increases with the development of knowledge, technology and civilization.

However, for some time, the new slavery has been increasing at a rate proportional to the level of civilization. This new slavery is different from the one in the ancient times. In the past, it was limited above all to the enslavement of a class of people in the economic and legal aspects and manifested in a clear division of society into masters and slaves. The latter were treated as things or instruments of production, with all the negative social and personal consequences. Now, there is no clear, legally sanctioned distinction between masters and slaves. This division is hidden and informal. There is no place where slavery is an official social system or a structure sanctioned by law. Modern slavery – the neo-slavery – is much more complex, because the today's masters (the ruling elites) are smarter, have better knowledge about enslavement and possess better means and ways of enslaving. It is a multidimensional phenomenon which operates at various levels and manifests itself in many forms, above all in treating people like objects. Neoslavery operates secretly, even in the neo-liberal regime, where freedom and equality are the keywords of programs of various political parties, and where the maximization of freedom is considered to be an objective trend of the social evolution, or even a historical necessity: in a free and democratic world, everyone should enjoy formal and real freedom and be happy about it. Unfortunately, the reality is different: enslavement of people progresses in a disguised way. They become increasingly informal, but actual slaves in the modern "free world" and are dissatisfied with this situation. Neoliberalism generates neoslavery in different forms and in different ways. Thus, Cicero's known quote *Extreme freedom leads nations and individuals to extreme slavery*, is confirmed. Actions which aim at enslavement are taken discreetly. Successful enslavement of people should occur without them realizing that they are already in captivity. This requires the use of sophisticated and perfidious methods, means and techniques of

manipulation that ultimately boil down to a simple fraud on freedom and to the blurring of borders between freedom and slavery. Often, even those, who participate in the global mechanism of enslaving others, imperceptibly, fall in the trap of slavery themselves. Enslavement is not an objective necessity of the social evolution, but rather the effect of the activities of social groups driven by economic reasons, and probably also of over-ambitious, egoistic individuals who are eager to rule others. Therefore, there is no sharp distinction between free people and slaves in neo-slavery, because – in fact – everyone is enslaved to a certain, greater or lesser, degree. People, who frantically run their errands, related not only to their existence and survival, but also to other less important issues, which are artificially (by manipulation) made important, are so busy that they do not know when they lose freedom, acquired so painstakingly through the ages. Unfortunately, when they realize it, it is already too late to become free again. While in the ancient times it was possible to redeem oneself from slavery, liberation is now virtually impossible. Knowing this fact overshadows the euphoria connected with striving for the desired freedom, increasingly giving way to disillusionment which results from the growing enslavement.

There are different forms, harbingers, and manifestations of neo-slavery. Neo-slavery is present on political, legal, economic, psychological, technological, religious and moral planes. There is also the enslavement in the social space and time.

One of the forms of modern slavery is the technological enslavement. It mainly results from the impossibility to live without modern technical equipment, due to transferring our functions connected with the work and life to them, as well as excessive reliance on the safety systems. The second form of neo-slavery is the psychological enslavement. It manifests itself in the form of behavioral, functional and ambition enslavement³. The first form is the compulsion to submit to the manner of behavior, dressing, speech, writing, etc., dictated by various pressure groups and fashion designers. Uniformed global styles conquered the world, so that everyone dresses, speaks and behaves in the same way. The second form is the slavery of rudeness and vulgarity. The third form – characteristic of the consumer society – results from the greed of possession and getting rich. It encourages pursuing career at any price and triggers an unhealthy ambition not only to be somebody who surrounds himself with genuine respect because of his personality qualities – knowledge, wisdom, honesty, etc., but to have something expensive which causes envy in others (a great house, car, job, clothing, power, etc.), impresses people, elevating themselves above

³ I define the functional enslavement as subordination to all external orders which enable people to function in different areas of social activity.

the average social standards. The unhealthy ambition to make a career and to be equal to the riches, celebrities or people in the higher positions of the social hierarchy, increases.

This generates other forms of slavery: the slavery of ugliness, tastelessness (careless clothing, hideous tattoos, idiotic hairstyles, decorating face on the model of ancient savage peoples etc.) as well as the slavery of the clock time. The first one results from the widespread violation of the traditional concept of beauty and of the classic aesthetic canons by various pseudo-creators and artistic mediocrity which – motivated by commercial objectives – makes up the lack of talent by nonchalance, excess, extravagance and shocking ugliness. The other one results from limiting the concept of time to reading the watch. This proceeds with the development of the capitalist formation connected with the tendency to accelerate the productivity of people and machines. The slavery of the lie is a form of functional enslavement. More and more often people have to lie for different reasons – not always voluntarily – and everywhere they are faced with lies because they live in a civilization of lie and deceit (see: Sztumski, 2010; Sztumski, 2008; Sztumski, 2009 a; Sztumski, 2013). The preservation of social harmony requires complex legal and moral regulations. Therefore, the law and ethics must intervene in an increasing number of situations and define the behavior and proceedings of people in a more detailed way. Hence, more and more prohibitions are created, which contribute to the enslavement of people.

In another form of neo-slavery, people are enslaved by producers and wholesalers. Manufacturers of goods (food, medicines, cosmetics, clothing, shoes, etc.) and wholesalers are intermediaries between producers and consumers. On the so called *free market*, we are forced to buy what the producers and wholesalers supply on the market, and not what we would like to buy. The freedom of shopping is limited to what is produced by the industry – even ugly and poor quality goods – and what sellers want to distribute. Only producers and traders are free. At present, it is traders, rather than consumers, who shape the needs of consumers, create the demands and dictate manufacturers what they ought to produce. As a rule, goods are produced at the lowest cost, are of increasingly lower quality and from cheap synthetic materials or substitutes.

Today, we are faced with another kind of slavery – the slavery of inactivity. The development of technology and work organization runs parallel to the process of liberation of people from work. However, it has negative effects. For example, automation, computerization and robotics contribute to the shortening of working time and the drastic elimination of jobs; fewer and fewer people have to be employed to produce the amount of goods needed by society. Therefore, structural, cyclical and functional unemployment increases rapidly. At the present

stage it is a mass phenomenon, which has become a real social plague; at least in countries with a high level of automation and robotics, but soon in other countries too, as they are catching up the technological delay fast. Unemployment is rising constantly with an upward trend. Boredom with professional and other inactivity (e.g. household work also requires much less time than in the past due to better appliances) increases as well. This has negative consequences for social life and psyche, thus driving people into slavery of inactivity and boredom.

Another manifestation of neo-slavery is the slavery of buildings. This concerns especially large cities, where the architecture and infrastructure restricts the free living space of their inhabitants.

8. Reduction of privacy

Privacy is still a controversial and highly unlikely concept. It consists in being aware of having *personal space*, free from the interference of other persons and organizations, and remaining only at one's disposal (see Clarke, 2006). I call it *an individual living space*. Privacy can be understood simply as clamming up, freeing oneself from the presence of other people or as hiding from them. However, there are other more or less complex definitions functioning in different spheres of life and human sciences⁴. Privacy is the liberation of an individual from the interference of other people in their life and affairs, regardless of whether they are prohibited by law or not and whether they have good or bad consequences. The concept of privacy reflects a strong sense of *ego*, being an important part of everyone's life and their personal world, which should be none of someone's business, and into which no one should interfere under any circumstances. Everyone has the right to have their world and do what they please, without considering other people. It is a world where one can do whatever they want, without being guided, spied or eavesdropped on – directly, through the senses or indirectly through plethora of various smart spyware devices – by anyone. Privacy has at least four dimensions:

- Physical: expressed in preserving our physical differences in relation to other physical objects, including people, in space and time.
- Expressive: expressed in the autonomous decision-making.
- Informative: expressed in the determination of the information about oneself which are not to be disclosed to any third party.

⁴ For example: Slan Westin defines privacy as the right of an individual to control, publish, manage and dispose of information about oneself and decide when, how and to what extent such information can be communicated to others (Westin, 1967).

- Virtual: expressed in the protection of our data in the virtual world (see Proshansky, Ittelson, Rivlin, 1978).

Therefore, privacy is a multidisciplinary research subject. Each of the exact sciences defines it differently and studies in specific terms, specifies different aspect of privacy in several dimensions. For this reason, there are following spaces of privacy:

- Psychological
- Political
- Ethical
- Legal
- Sociological.

The privacy of individuals is being increasingly threatened in all its spaces and dimensions. While it has always been violated, restricted and threatened, never to such an extent as now, so intrusively and cleverly. People have always been tapped, watched and pursued (predominantly in government and business circles) by various informants, detectives, spies and informers. However, firstly, they acted secretly, sometimes even with a courtesy, secondly, they did not act on a mass scale, and thirdly, they had no such sensitive, microscopic and amazing equipment. Besides, spies were generally unwelcome in social circles, not accepted by the society and at the risk of ostracism. Therefore, they did not boast about it. Now, the situation is quite different. Bands of voyeurs, paparazzi, spies, detectives and secret agents prowl everywhere openly and with impunity, and they even boast about this with pride and arrogance. The society, which is already accustomed to the various exhibitionist excesses, does not react defensively, oppose or stigmatize, as if there was nothing wrong in depriving people of their privacy or intimacy. Some people actually want it, and even provoke to publish intimate facts from their personal lives because they want to show themselves in the media and thus be recognizable and famous. Sometimes, spies are even considered national heroes, and voyeurs are often lavishly rewarded. Even worse, as a result of various manipulations and advertising, the public demand for information about what should be hidden or better left unsaid is growing. In order to justify the development of the market of spies and voyeurs which denude people literally and figuratively – likely, a market worth several billion dollars – so-called ideology of transparency in public life, was conceived, which allegedly is essential for democracy. Unfortunately, transparency is confused with denudation. The progressive reduction of privacy accompanies the growing global crisis of confidence, especially since the fateful day of September 11, 2001. Henceforth, *supervised society* is being formed for fear of attacks from the outside and the inside, even in the most democratic countries. Citizens and foreigners are monitored more and more thoroughly and their private sphere is subjected to a

far-reaching invigilation⁵. Development of civilization reduces the sphere of privacy and contributes to its absorption by the public sphere. Modern technologies enable the supervision of society to a greater extent. New spying devices as if encourage people to encroach into the private life of others, to watch them in different situations, to record their behavior on storage media and to transmit the information gained illegally (see Schaar, 2009). The sphere of privacy is a part of an individual human living space. It constantly decreases as a result of the growing population and its density, as well as development of networking, urbanization, various kinds of infrastructure (roads, shopping and services, communications, etc.), legal and administrative restrictions, and as a result of increasing number of orders, prohibitions, norms and standards that limit independent and free choices. Therefore, the question about the limits of privacy reduction of an individual arises: how far one can reduce their privacy, so as not to endanger their health and proper functioning in the society? This question should be considered in the broader context of the relation between the human as an autonomous being and as a social being, as well as the relation between individualism and collectivism. Human autonomy requires isolation from the public sphere in favor of his private sphere. One must also determine why and to what extent one should protect their privacy, as well as when and in the name of what one should resign from it. There are many reasons why people do not want others to know something about them and why they want to keep something secret from others. Two experts in the field of information security, Philips Schumann and Christian Reiser, indicate the following reasons:

- Some data may cause shame or distress, e.g. in the field of intimacy, sexuality, weaknesses, etc.
- One's personal information in possession of others can be used in order to gain control or power over them or to exert pressure on them, which could harm their professional or political career.
- Sometimes one wants to keep something secret, so as not to arouse negative emotions in others (jealousy, envy, desire).
- Sometimes one believes that the possession of certain information (e.g. about diseases, political or religious affiliation) by others could discriminate them.

⁵ As part of the phone hacking scandal in the UK, up to six thousand people could have been intercepted – says the British police. Illegal taps have been installed in the telephone voice mail of almost 5800 people. That is almost 2000 more than the number stated by the Committee of Inquiry in July. The exact number of taps is unknown. The police claimed that accurate data will be verified with the influx of evidence (Gazeta Wyborcza, 4.11.2011).

- One may want to keep something secret to surprise somebody (see Schumann, Reiser, 2011).

Following reasons speak in favor of protection of privacy:

- Psychological (human demands privacy, both in the public space and alone, to hide from others and to behave in an uncontrolled manner – go crazy with anger or jump from joy).
- Sociological (the man must be able to behave freely and to choose friends among other people without fear of being watched).
- Economic (the man should have the right to free economic activities).
- Political (in a democratic country people should have the freedom of thought, ideas, social activities and argumentation).

Everything indicates that privacy will be further reduced. That is why one has to start defending their privacy as soon as possible and in every way, in addition to learning to live in the conditions of increasing transparency, voyeurism and invigilation.

9. Social and individual time

One of the effects of the cultural impact on nature is the evolution of the concept of social time. That is why people experience time in two separate ways: as a change in the natural and in the social environment. Natural and social time are in principle objective, because both are independent of individual persons. Subjective is only the perception of natural and social time by an individual; this is what we name the psychological time. It is one of the other categories of time we know, as e.g. physical, biological, economic, religious, artistic etc. Each one is a function of two variables: nature and culture. Their common feature is that they can be quantitatively determined, and that the flow of each time can be measured by periodically recurring phenomena in nature, society and man. Therefore, each time can be reduced to the physical one. There are as many concepts of time and ways of experiencing it, as there are cultures.

We determine our pace of life by psychological time. It increases proportionally to the technological development – to the increasing speed of the technical devices used by people use in everyday life and to the number of inventions, which allow us to move more rapidly, communicate information faster and shorten the time to perform various actions. Initially, the time of technological operations was shortened for economic reasons. Then, the time of various non-productive activities was shortened, even in the areas of entertainment and recreation. With the development of civilization people always want to save time; they are constantly in hurry somewhere and they speed up what is possible. Today, we live in a very *galloping society* ruled by

the principle of acceleration. People produce, provide services, eat, drink, play, use their free time, think, learn, teach, read, speak, listen, watch, move, communicate, are with each other, experience life, decide, choose, rest, love and even pray faster and faster. The pursuit of *the fleeing time* is getting quicker and seems to have no end. The increasing pace of our life is also caused by the more accurate measurement of time. However, only people, and nothing else, are responsible for accelerating the pace of their life and for the harmful effects of this phenomenon. The principle of acceleration is in fact a consequence of the ideology of consumerism created by humans. This ideology drives people into the insane pursuit of profit and material goods and forces people to chase faster them. The increased of the pace of life has constantly accompanied the progress of civilization, but it was felt most severely in the second half of the twentieth century. It seems that the acceleration of pace of work and life is now approaching the critical point because of physiological and psychological reasons.

As the civilization develops, culture interferes in the natural consciousness of time and deforms it. It distorts the natural rhythms of time and contributes to the deregulation of biological clocks in humans. The natural rhythm of human life depends mostly on the time of day and year. Biological and physiological processes periodically intensify depending on circadian rhythms and on seasons. Such physiological parameters as body temperature, blood pressure, breathing, food time, resistance, hormone levels, heart rate, the exchange of substances, and the brain activity depend on circadian rhythms. Chronobiology also confirmed that the functioning of our nervous system and psyche (the concentration of attention, memory, reaction time to external stimuli, irritability, etc.) depends on the rotation of the Earth around its axis and around the Sun. Unfortunately, seventy countries have introduced seasonal time change from winter to summer and vice versa, guided by economic reasons. This affects people adversely, because it disturbs their internal biological clocks which respond to light more so than to the indication of physical clocks. These changes negatively impact the functioning of the human body. Putting the clock back or forward by an hour has the effect of *time shock* similarly to a mini jet lag, as in the case of crossing several time zones in a plane. Research conducted in Germany at the University of Würzburg by Charlotte Forster, a professor of neurobiology, specialist in the field of the functioning of internal clocks at the molecular and neuronal level, as well as by researchers in the US and other countries have confirmed that in the first days after the change of time, the risk of heart attack increases, while the ability to focus attention decreases, and office workers are prone to cyberloafing: surfing the Internet sites unrelated to their work (see Zeibig, 2014).

Today, people neglect their chronotypes and deregulate their internal clocks. That is why they live in a constant conflict between what they should do in accordance with their internal, biological clocks, and what they must do due to the cultural requirements of culture, guided by external clocks. This, of course, exerts a negative influence on their health and causes permanent stress. For years, the rhythms of life, tuned to the internal clocks, were in line with the rhythms of nature, as a result of the good synchronization of endogenous and exogenous clocks. This synchronization occurred spontaneously and involuntarily, because it was one of the necessary conditions for the survival of the human species. However, for some time, people have become obsessed with improving the nature in accordance with their criteria of perfection. We increasingly oppose bio-standards and natural conditions of life and surrender to the artificial rhythms. As a result of this, we observe an undergoing desynchronization of natural rhythms with artificial rhythms. The progress of civilization disrupts our internal clocks. Social environment enforces constant acceleration of the rhythms of life, which increasingly diverge from the ones established for centuries by the natural environment. Mainly due to economic reasons, people need to change their circadian rhythm – adjust, shorten or lengthen the phase of its activity, also to the night hours, which the nature has earmarked for sleep. As Peter Spork, a neuroscientist, rightly warns, *sooner or later, the constant turning of night into the day or the day into night will get back at us* (see Spork, 2014).

The original polychronic culture has been replaced by the monochronic culture which triumphs in the modern world, because it better reflects the *spirit of our times*, i.e. the requirements of free market economy, the competitive struggle, the pursuit of profit, desire to get rich, the pursuit of maximum efficiency and the cult of money. Monochronic culture is based on the physical, clock time. It raised people who are not allowed to be late, and who must count every second (in sports, even thousandths of a second) and that is why they want to be as accurate as their watches. Every moment, a man called *homo horologicus* reads the watch unconsciously. The *man-watch* who wants to be punctual at any cost and for whom *time is money*, voluntarily subjects to the pressure of time. Some of these people are so addicted to the watch that they can even relax by looking at the rapidly changing numbers on the display of the watch. The watch has become the instrument of terror of time and its effects are felt very acutely.

Monochronic culture is essentially the one of tradesmen, because time plays an increasingly important role in the merchant-banking and stock exchange operations, which require shortening the

execution time to a minimum. When the operation time is extended or delayed, it causes a financial loss or a loss in the fight against the competition. For this reason, time is of economic importance and it ceased to be a free or public good, such as air or water. It is non-renewable. Time was subordinated to the market mechanisms and transformed into a quasi-public good, a commodity with steadily increasing market price. The more we pay for it, the less we have. Time is fundamentally different from other goods, because it cannot be put on the counter, store or save.

The necessary condition for the survival in monochronic culture is to be in a constant hurry. Life in the modern world is like running on a treadmill, which moves faster and faster. When one steps on it, one must run faster to keep up on it. But when, for various reasons one cannot, then one begins to fall behind and eventually out of it, which usually ends unpleasantly. Many people – despite their best intentions – cannot keep up with the increasing pace of life (the speed of movement of capital, labor, goods, information, etc.). Who does not participate in the insane race or who is not able to keep up on the *treadmill of social life*, falls out. In other words, they are excluded from the galloping society, increase the margins of society and gradually lose their chance of survival. The potential of human adaptation to the increasing pace is limited by anatomical, physiological and psychological factors. Everything seems to indicate that this potential will quickly be exhausted. Therefore, in the future, it will be increasingly difficult for people to adapt to the increasing pace of life by accelerating their bodily and intellectual activities. Already, more and more people cannot cope with it, despite augmenting their bodies with technological devices and psychotropic drugs. These people live in an ever deepening stress and succumb to various kinds of civilizational diseases. In short, humanity fell into the trap of acceleration and does not know how to get out of it. Perhaps some meaningful solution could be found on the basis of the ecology of time. Finding the right measure of time and gradual deceleration of the pace of life would be the way out of the trap. Therefore, one of the assumptions of the ecology of time is to stop the race of people with increasingly faster technical devices and to return to the natural rhythms of life. However, this would require a cultural revolution (Glotz, 2001, p. 47). At first, the old paradigm of slowness should be restored, according to the classical Roman adage *Festina lente* (*Make haste slowly*). Especially, as such slowdown would not harm the economy. Conversely, research has shown that the people who adjust their pace of life and work to own biological clock and to their chronotypes, work better and are more efficient (*Die biologische Uhr...*, 2001).

10. Degradation of work environment

The work environment includes following components:

1. Material elements of workplace (equipment, infrastructure), organization and management system.
2. The crew (groups of employees, work teams, brigades).
3. The relationship between employees (horizontal: *employer-employee* and vertical: *employee-supervisors*).
4. Work awareness formed under the influence of the concept of working conditions, work climate, and evaluation of work.

Equipment and material conditions in the workplace significantly improved under the influence of the idea of humanization of work, carried out in the developed countries since the mid-twentieth century. These include: the aesthetics of the interior, ergonomic tools and equipment, internal transport and communication, auxiliary equipment to reduce the physical effort. Humanization of work involves the creation of increasingly better working conditions, a favorable work climate, and human treatment of workers by adherence to safety rules, following the recommendations of the psychology of work, labor law and the fulfillment of norms of professional ethics. It should be kept in mind that the humanization of work is not dictated by authentic care for the welfare of the worker on and did not emerge on moral grounds, but out of economic reasons. In capitalism, there is nothing for free. Every employer knows that people work more productively, if they are cared for and work in better conditions. Thus, humanization seems to be a cleverly camouflaged tool to increase productivity, profit and exploitation. Be that as it may, humanization undoubtedly contributes to the improvement of the work environment.

However, it did not occur due to the subjective factors – interpersonal relations and work awareness, but mainly as a result of the chase for profit or the desire of employers and workers to become rich. The desire of employers to achieve the maximum profit exerts a constant pressure on cutting the costs of production, especially through increasing the work efficiency and accelerating the pace of work. This negatively impacts the health of workers and their attitudes towards the work. It also contributes to the increasing imbalance between the production costs, wages, and prices of products: production costs are dropping, sale prices are raising, while the wages remain unchanged or increase with great delay and to a lesser extent than the profits of employers.

This escalates the social conflicts concerning the unjust wages. Therefore, we deal more often with the strikes which are increasingly severe and on a larger scale. Conflicts between employers and em-

ployees worsen the mutual relations between them and spoil the atmosphere at workplaces. The employees also want to get rich. Thus, they agree to raise the standards of efficiency and the pace of work. They are aware that the more they are productive, the more they can earn, and that they will be more valuable for employers; in this way they hope to avoid being made redundant and unemployment. Competitive struggle between employees increases along with the growth of unemployment. It disrupts interpersonal relations among the crew, and has a negative impact on the work environment.

The deterioration of the work climate is also caused by the conflict between production workers and others, in particular office workers. This results from the anachronistic notion of work. The understanding of labor, rooted in the consciousness of the masses, increasingly deviates from what, in fact, work is today. It derives from the times when people used primitive tools, machines and endosomatic energy of their muscles. Now, we use highly complicated tools and various forms of exosomatic energy. In consequence, our physical effort in the vast majority of work is reduced to the proverbial pressing of a computer button. Today's work requires more mental than physical effort. Despite this obviousness, people understand the work as a physical effort, and on this basis they still perpetuate the old stereotype of a working man. The work is associated with the *sweat of their brow*. This stereotype has not changed despite automation, computerization and robotization. Work is also defined as a paid activity which ensures our existence, provides goods and wealth, and allows us to realize our life goals. Therefore, the notion of work is reduced to its economic (earning money), and partly to the physical (energy consumption) dimensions. However, there are as many dimensions of work, as there are aspects and areas of human activity. The notion of work is dynamic and should be determined adequately to the historical conditions and to the technological progress levels. However, this is not the case. In accordance with the prevailing stereotype of work, people think that, in fact, the only employees who work are employed directly in the areas of production and material services and that the growth of national income is only due to their contribution; for this reason they should be the paid best and adored. Unfortunately, economists think so too. This generates pathological demanding attitudes and underlies the unjust pay system. On average, workers earn more than the officials, despite the fact that mental work often causes more fatigue than physical work. Generally, it does not count the increased stress and mental fatigue the white-collar workers are subjected to. In addition, the animosities between the workers and officials are increasing due to the growing disproportion – often unjustified by economic or organizational

rationality – the number of officials constantly grows, while the number of manual workers dwindles. This disproportion will increase despite the fact that automation and robotization reduce manufacturing and office operations. The future will belong to the intellectual work. The traditional *economic* and *physical* notions of work do not include the unpaid activities which are socially necessary, e.g. upbringing of children in the family or home management, as if they were no less important or hard than paid activities⁶. Society and the state do not want to pay for such kinds of work. Even if one wanted to pay for these activities, it is unknown what quantitative criteria of wages one should be applied. This problem could be solved by econometricians. These jobs are underestimated, because, allegedly, they do not contribute to the growth of national income. This is true, but only when it does not include the so-called human capital. We do not know what the obstacles are: either the laziness of economists guided by nineteenth-century categories of economics, or something else. In times of universal commodification, the final outcome of the parents' work – the care for survival of their children – are persons well brought up, healthy and able to work for the benefit of society, i.e. as the labor force, and should have a specific price. It is high time to redefine the basic categories of economics – labor, capital, national income, etc., in order to better fit them to the contemporary conditions and to avoid unnecessary social conflicts. The negative work awareness is formed mainly because people know many negative effects of work, mostly the increasing exploitation by employers. Workers know that their work brings huge profits derived from the overt or covert forms of exploitation only to a handful people, the rest receive only a small income which ensures their survival and revolves around the social minimum or poverty threshold⁷. Hence, more and more people

⁶ It is not about giving alms to mothers in the form of child-raising allowances – but to pay for the toil of pregnancy, childbirth and childcare with at least the minimum national wage and by adding the so-called one year contributory period of employment for pension purposes. Undoubtedly, this would be beneficial both for mothers and for the state. Mother would feel appreciated by the state, which would give them psychological comfort, especially as they could concentrate more on the proper care for good upbringing, no longer having to deal with financial difficulties. The state would benefit from this too, as the main educational obligations would fall on the mother; therefore, the state would not have resort to the deficit nurseries, orphanages, and other institutions financed from the budget and probably would spend less on the treatment of children, paying for curators and various care and education organizations.

⁷ World Bank President Robert Mc Namara has first defined the absolute threshold of poverty as living on the edge of existence. It is achieved when the amount of money a person has for one day equals \$ 1.25. According

prefer to work in the service sectors and in professions that do not require a lot of effort. They do not want to be wage-workers and, therefore, they set up their own companies or even sole proprietorships. They think that in this way no one will exploit them. Of course, they are wrong because they are being exploited anyway. Exploitation is the inseparable companion of capitalism. People are becoming more and more convinced that they are not created to work, and the concept of *homo faber* is a work of culture, rather than nature. That is true, because so far, no gene of work was found in the human genome (Groll, 2011).

Negative awareness of work also stems from the fact that the paid work has begun generating a lot more harmful than beneficial effects for individuals, society and the human species. The constructive role of work is changing to a destructive one. While in the past work perfected people – their body and intellect – and along with the development of science and technology, it made them more human and free, at present, work degenerates people, making them less human and more enslaved. Work began to bring more evil than good (see Sztumski, 2009 b), not only to people, but also to the social and natural environment, because:

- It objectifies and dehumanizes people as the consequence of the progressive alienation of labor⁸ and of the mechanomorphization of people (see Sztumski, 2005).
- More efficient work causes physical and mental wear and premature professional burnout proportionally to the intensity and pace of the work⁹.

to the World Bank approximately 1.2 billion people in the world live below this level. Relative poverty threshold depends on the country, culture, and other economic and social factors. WHO and OECD determine the poverty threshold as the average of 50% of net income per capita in the country. In Germany, where the poverty threshold for a single person is the monthly income of 979 Euro, and for a family of two adults and two children under 14 years of age – 2 065 Euro, today (2014) approximately 13 million people live below the poverty level (16% of the population). In the US, this level amounts to \$ 975 for a single person, and \$ 1962 for a 4-person family (<http://www.cec.de/armutsgrenze.html>; 12/02/2014) In Poland, where the average monthly net salary in the corporate sector in October 2014 was \$ 945 net, the poverty threshold is \$ 473, and therefore, supposedly ca 60% of people in Poland live on the edge of poverty, (see Bissio, 2013).

⁸ About one hundred and fifty years ago, Karl Marx proved that the alienated work causes the estrangement of man from: nature, himself (the most important feature of human life), and the human species (see Marx, 1848). In the present capitalism, work further alienates and dehumanizes people: they become enemies for themselves, relate to each other objectively and they gradually transform to irrational cyborgs.

⁹ Each work intensifies tiredness by increasing productivity and its pace. Continuous improvement of performance by employers, driven by their desire to maximize profit,

- Work, which should enrich employees, contributes to their increasing impoverishment.
- The accelerating pace of work also implies the acceleration of other activities in non-productive areas of life, thus generating a certain psychosis of acceleration.
- Formal and informal extension of working time increasingly limits the free time¹⁰. At present, there is no clear division between working time and free time (see Morgenthaler, 2014).
- Growth of productivity leads to an excessive increase in demand and consequently to wastefulness¹¹.
- Modern work creates unemployment and becomes a luxury good¹².

requires a constant increase of the pace of work, multi-machines operations, increasing physical and intellectual effort, as well as overtime work. This causes a rapid professional burnout. On the other hand, due to the *organizational deficiencies* many people spend time in the workplace not working; they do not want to laze around, but they are forced to, because simply they do not have anything to do. Therefore – as stated by Roland Paulsen, a sociologist at the University of Lund (Sweden) – office workers in the United States, Sweden, Germany and Singapore deal with their private matters at work for an average of two to three hours a day (see Paulsen, 2014).

¹⁰ People have less and less time for everything: recreation, entertainment, regeneration of the body and mind. As a result, they are less resistant physically and mentally. Reducing time to develop the intellect and thinking results in progressive stupidity.

¹¹ With the increase in work productivity, the production of goods grows much faster than the demand for them. As a result of the overproduction, the balance between supply and demand is disrupted. To alleviate it, one creates artificial demand and stimulates the overconsumption. However, the growth in demand requires a further increase in supply of products and more productive work. Hence, there is a self-reinforcing spiral of overproduction, overconsumption, and over-demand. Thanks to the work, one satisfies their needs and creates new ones, above the standard. Satisfying them causes overproduction, overconsumption and increasingly faster rotation of goods requiring increased exploitation of raw materials and energy; this causes wastefulness. The work that earlier impelled people to rational management and made them economical, now makes them spendthrifts. In this way *homo rationalis* transforms itself in *homo prodigus*.

¹² This is the paradox of work. On the one hand, the progress of civilization, overproduction, oversupply and fast rotation of goods contribute to the creation of new jobs – work creates jobs. At the same time, as a result of technological progress, increased efficiency and improvement of technology, less and less people are required to work. Thus, the number of workers and working hours needed to produce the amount of goods to satisfy the current demand and the needs of people is lowered. In addition, due to the lengthening of the average lifespan, the number of people in the working age increases rapidly and significantly. Therefore, it deepens the imbalance between the number of people able to work and the number of jobs. Thus, the prospect of rising

- Work environment is becoming more stressful and the work climate generates neurosis¹³.

Work environment requires protection and rehabilitation from decision-makers, employers and employees. Its improvement depends on economists and politicians – their involvement in the eliminating the causes of disharmony in the work environment. First of all, their task is to maintain jobs at a relatively constant and sustainable level, permitted by the state of the economy of a country, to ensure fair remuneration and to shape interpersonal relations favorable to a proper work climate. The task of the employers' activity is to improve the work environment, while the one of employees – to change their attitudes towards work, not treating it as obligation or punishment, but also as satisfaction and benefaction: *Work does not just be painful. It is also valuable and perhaps the key to heaven* (see Kittner, 2005).

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unemployment with all its negative consequences for individuals, communities, countries and the world becomes increasingly plausible. In such conditions, work becomes a luxury item and a deficit good for which one has to fight for on the unbalanced labor market. This market is shrinking steadily and proportionally to automation, computerization (robotics), improvement of technology, management, and reducing production costs. Soon, perhaps only a few chosen ones – particularly gifted, creative, productive, or those who accidentally succeed in finding a job – will be able to enjoy work. Work becomes something attractive, an object of admiration and envy, a determinant of human happiness.

¹³ The pressure of time, media overload and increasing number of tasks overlap each other. Competitive pressure and mobbing are some of the consequences. The stress in the workplace resulting from competitive pressures and mobbing often contributes to mental illnesses. Therefore, for example in Germany the number of disability cases due to psychological complaints increased by about 70 percent in the period from 1997 to 2004 (Gaebel, 2014).

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