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## «КРЕАТИВНЫЙ ПОВОРОТ» В ЕВРОПЕЙСКОЙ СОЦИАЛЬНОЙ ТЕОРИИ

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В статье выявляются специфические черты современной европейской социальной теории в рамках ее обращения к природе креативных практик. Демонстрируются различные социально-философские методы их познания. Экспликация характера европейской социальной теории как единого целого показывает ее всевозрастающий интерес к формированию теории креативного общества и критическому обоснованию с ее помощью комплекса политических программ «Креативная Европа». Автор определяет концепт креативного поворота в пределах компаративного анализа тех теорий современного общества, которые исследуют специфику социальной реальности, конституирующейся на базе креативной экономики. Ее практики становятся специальным предметом изучения социальной теории, раскрывающей общественные границы их реализации.

**Ключевые слова:** социальная теория; европейская социальная теория; креативные практики; социальные практики; креативный поворот; практический поворот; креативное общество; теория креативного общества.

## «THE CREATIVE TURN» IN EUROPEAN SOCIAL THEORY

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The article reveals specific features of contemporary European social theory within its turn to the nature of creative practices. Different socio-philosophical methods of their cognition are demonstrated. The explication of the character of European social theory as a whole outlines the increasing interest in the formation of a theory of creative society which critically grounds the set of political programmes «Creative Europe». The author defines the concept of the creative turn within a comparative analysis of those theories of contemporary society which explore the peculiarity of social reality constituting on the basis of creative economy. Its practices become a special subject matter of social theory revealing societal limitations of their fulfillment.

**Keywords:** social theory; European social theory; creative practices; social practices; creative turn; practical turn; creative society; theory of creative society.

### Introduction

European studies, full of twists and turns over the last twenty years, have come more sharply into the focus of the present-day criticism of social philosophy. Their

theoretical frameworks receive only sporadic attention in the margins of highly specialised publications. This gap configures the subject matter of recently emerged

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critical European studies<sup>1</sup>, which aim at the critical analysis of Europe as a whole with a strong theoretical and methodological grounding.

The interdisciplinary field of European studies rooted in a broad spectrum of theoretical perspectives has always been far from free of misunderstandings in the traditional hierarchy of scientific competences in academia. Admittedly, there are sharp differences between regional perspectives of European studies, how they may be methodologically shaped and developed beyond strictly or relatively determined disciplinary and scientific boundaries. All these issues become quite visible in any attempt to find a grand social theory which would be able to reveal and explain specific features of contemporary European social reality, in case if it may be distinguished as a European one and still as a social one<sup>2</sup>.

This article briefly outlines a research path from a discourse analysis of the politically formatted conception of creative Europe<sup>3</sup> [4; 5] to a critical enquiry into an emerging theory of creative society [6–12]. A bridge which has to connect two different realms of political programming and theoretical reflection will be constructed by taking as major empirical sources the European political programmes on cultural and economic development, expert reports and scientific articles to which they refer. These types of sources constitute a *reference framework* for a variety of emerging interdisciplinary conceptions of creative industries, often reunited and reinterpreted under the broader categories of creative economy and creative society.

A certain entanglement took place between the emergence of the sector of *creative industries*<sup>4</sup> and the formation of the European space of *creative capital* [13]. The latter came to be one of the main globally competitive projects of contemporary Europe. However, while being quite often considered as the major expression of the present-day Europe, the phenomenon and

concept of creative culture is not the only embodiment of today's European spirit.

This article sets out the main features that define the specificity of European approaches to the present social reality as a creative one and aims at distinguishing them from the American enquiry into the creative class. Against accounts that emphasise a master narrative of R. Florida's creative class, it is argued that crucial to the transformation of Europe into a so-called «place to create» becomes the European authentic *lifestyle*<sup>5</sup>, which still differs from the American one. The European creative lifestyle has enabled common practices to develop across a range of different cultures. In this way the European creative space has to be explored with an appropriate social theory which would be enough receptive to the challenges of the *creative age*, but at the same time would be enough sensitive to nuances and overtones of the *European ethos*. That is a path leading a researcher to the field of axiology whereby one may elaborate value foundations for an emerging theory of creative society and outline prospects for its further application to the European reality. Even when being strongly influenced by R. Florida's idea of creative class, one could attempt to outline an identifiable difference between the European and American concepts of creative society, a clear divergence between two approaches to the same thematic field in theory and practice. A slightly sharpened rift, which may seem sometimes artificially constructed, plays a role of a temporary instrument model for further elaboration and application of diverse regional approaches to the concept of creative society.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has witnessed the increasing interest in the *creativity dispositif*<sup>6</sup> and various ways of its embodiment in social, political and economic practices. To explain their specific characteristics in today's Europe, the following questions need further elaboration: «What are the defining features of the European

<sup>1</sup>See the recently launched book series «Routledge critical European studies» (<https://www.routledge.com/Critical-European-Studies/book-series/CEU>).

<sup>2</sup>J. Urry [1], J. Law [2] and B. Latour [3] replace the reality of the social (as well as the political and the economic) with the nature of the actor-network relationships.

<sup>3</sup>European Commission. Impact assessment. Accompanying the document Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Creative Europe Framework programme. 23.11.2011 SEC (2011) 1399 final [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52011SC1399&from=BG> (date of access: 07.02.2021) ; European Commission. A New European Agenda for Culture. 22.5.2018 SWD (2018) 167 final [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://ec.europa.eu/culture/document/new-european-agenda-culture-swd2018-267-final> (date of access: 07.02.2021) ; European Commission. Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Creative Europe Programme (2021 to 2027) and Repealing Regulation (EU) No. 1295/2013, COM/2018/366 final, 2018/0190 (COD) [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2018%3A366%3AFIN> (date of access: 04.04.2021) ; European Parliament, Council of the European Union. Regulation (EU) No. 1295/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Creative Europe Programme (2014 to 2020) and repealing decisions No. 1718/2006/EC, No. 1855/2006/EC and No. 1041/2009/EC // Off. J. Eur. Union. 2013. Vol. 56, L 347/221 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=cellex%3A32013R1295> (date of access: 04.04.2021) ; KEA European Affairs. Research for CULT Committee – Creative Europe: Towards the next programme generation. Brussels: European Parliament, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, June 2018 [Electronic resource]. URL: [http://www.keanet.eu/wp-content/uploads/IPOL\\_STU2018617479\\_EN.pdf](http://www.keanet.eu/wp-content/uploads/IPOL_STU2018617479_EN.pdf) (date of access: 04.04.2021).

<sup>4</sup>DCMS. Creative Industries Mapping Document. London: Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2001 [Electronic resource]. URL: [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive\\_2001/ci\\_mapping\\_doc\\_2001.htm](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive_2001/ci_mapping_doc_2001.htm) (date of access: 10.01.2021).

<sup>5</sup>For more information on European and American lifestyles of the creative class, see D. Parrish [14], J. Ridderstrale and K. A. Nordstrom [15], R. Florida [16], P. Bourdieu [17].

<sup>6</sup>This concept is one of the major categories in A. Reckwitz's social theory [10]. Though he does not refer to the following source, it is necessary to mention that the concept was coined by G. Wallas in 1914 [18].



creative practice that provide its distinctiveness?», «Which of social theories, if any, might constitute a conceptual reference framework for the “Creative Europe”?»<sup>7</sup> [4; 5], «What is the creative age of Europe and what does its creative capital consist of?».

The article tackles quite abstract problems of philosophical substantiation of the European creative society concept within social theory. The argument advanced in this text is that neither theories of information, knowledge and innovation society, nor theories of globalisation, digital and network society<sup>8</sup> offer adequate accounts of the present-day European political project. One of the truly pressing problems is the absence of a grand theory which could justify the vividly manifested project of creative Europe. This signification may be sceptically considered as a political metaphor or construct, which needs further elaboration in order to be transformed into a scientific concept. At the same time, we may face a widespread opinion that the variety of political pro-

grammes<sup>9</sup> embraced by the title «Creative Europe»<sup>10</sup> has already accumulated and quite effectively employed key ideas and notions of a well established theory of creative class in sociology and economics [16; 19; 20]. Since the early 2000s, the latter has been working as a medium of European attempts to reassess and visualise cultural capital in terms of economic theory<sup>11</sup>. In spite of the increasing interest in the phenomenon of creative class in both theory and practice, it has gradually been subjected to much more radical criticism within academia and political expertise [6; 21–26].

The author finally raises the question: «Which theories may contribute to the explanation of value contradictions in late modern social dynamics?» If we are able to face this question, we have a chance to find a unique niche in the creative age with its new ethical challenges. Being aware of the risk we are running, we have to constantly retrace various configurations of creative space in terms of its societal limitations.

### From the theory of creative action to a theory of creative society

This section focuses on the emergence of a theory of creative society in the context of the 1990s neo-pragmatism of the German sociologist H. Joas and its application to European political programmes over the last twenty years. The same trend may be revealed in the range of events in the USA from the publications «The creative economy» by J. Howkins [27] and «The rise of the creative class» by R. Florida [19] to «The new urban crisis» [20], and their application to state policy strategies beyond the national ones. However, when high-

lighting the role of mainstream American approaches of the so-called creative gurus to a new concept, one should not miss the fact that the first political slogan «creative society» was introduced by R. Reagan’s campaign already in 1966 [28], whereas the concept «creative democracy» was coined by J. Dewey even earlier, in 1939 [29].

Present-day experts in cultural policies declare very confidently the innovative achievements in concept building of European and American urbanists

<sup>7</sup>European Commission. Impact assessment. Accompanying the document Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Creative Europe Framework programme. 23.11.2011 SEC (2011) 1399 final [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52011SC1399&from=BG> (date of access: 04.04.2021) ; European Commission. A New European Agenda for Culture. 22.5.2018 SWD (2018) 167 final [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://ec.europa.eu/culture/document/new-european-agenda-culture-swd2018-267-final> (date of access: 04.04.2021) ; European Commission. Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Creative Europe Programme (2021 to 2027) and Repealing Regulation (EU). No. 1295/2013, COM/2018/366 final, 2018/0190 (COD) [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2018%3A366%3AFIN> (date of access: 04.04.2021) ; European Parliament, Council of the European Union. Regulation (EU) No. 1295/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Creative Europe Programme (2014 to 2020) and repealing decisions No. 1718/2006/EC, No. 1855/2006/EC and No. 1041/2009/EC // Off. J. Eur. Union. 2013. Vol. 56, L 347/221 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=cel-ex%3A32013R1295> (date of access: 04.04.2021).

<sup>8</sup>There are outlined only those theoretical sources which are highly cited in reference frameworks of political programmes on the creative industries and creative economy in Europe [6].

<sup>9</sup>The present-day set of programmes «Creative Europe» and their research sources constitute the empirical background for the reconstruction of the idea of European creative society. Socio-philosophical and sociological texts are used to conceptualise these programmes. The notion «programme» signifies in this article a set of political statements expressing long-term aims and principles of policy-making.

<sup>10</sup>European Commission. A New European Agenda for Culture. 22.5.2018 SWD (2018) 167 final [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://ec.europa.eu/culture/document/new-european-agenda-culture-swd2018-267-final> (date of access: 07.02.2021) ; European Commission. Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Creative Europe Programme (2021 to 2027) and Repealing Regulation (EU). No. 1295/2013, COM/2018/366 final, 2018/0190 (COD) [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2018%3A366%3AFIN> (date of access: 04.04.2021) ; European Parliament, Council of the European Union. Regulation (EU) No. 1295/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Creative Europe Programme (2014 to 2020) and repealing decisions No. 1718/2006/EC, No. 1855/2006/EC and No. 1041/2009/EC // Off. J. Eur. Union. 2013. Vol. 56, L 347/221 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=cel-ex%3A32013R1295> (date of access: 04.04.2021).

<sup>11</sup>KEA European Affairs. The economy of culture in Europe: a study prepared for the European Commission [Electronic resource]. URL: [http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/culture/library/studies/cultural-economy\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/culture/library/studies/cultural-economy_en.pdf) (date of access: 04.04.2021) ; KEA European Affairs. The impact of culture on creativity: a study prepared for the European Commission [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://www.keanet.eu/docs/impactculturecreativityfull.pdf> (date of access: 04.04.2021).





[13; 19; 27; 30–32] in the early 2000s, appealing to the pragmatist theory of creative action. In the context of increasing interest in the creative economy, it may be reminded that already in the early 1990s H. Joas had managed to develop the pragmatist theory of creative action and substantiated its interconnection with a theory of creative society arising at that time. His work «The creativity of action» does not provide any clear definition of creative action, it only outlines the necessary conditions of its existence: corporeality, intentionality and sociality. The comprehension of its specific features and conditions of their actualisation in social reality is a necessary foundation for building a democratic society. Hence, the creative action theory is a prerequisite for building a creative democratic society in which creativity and democracy are interwoven.

The intentionality, corporeality and social character of human action as such are primary manifestations of creativity, the existence of which is mandatory for the formation and realisation of human action. In other words, the human action is creative from the moment of its origination, but the degree of manifestation and realisation of creativity is a result of the further development of personality in society. In this respect, any human action is potentially creative.

H. Joas develops the creative action theory opposing it to theories of rational and communicative action, subjecting to criticism any metasocial guarantees of social action realisation (which underlay the concepts of social action of M. Weber, T. Parsons and J. Habermas [33–36]), and thereby reveals a space for human action creativity. The German sociologist argues that the space for human action opens up when individuals decide to put forward their own claims to creativity. In this context he raises the question of whether human creativity requires some boundaries and limitations, which are to be established by ethics. However, H. Joas gives no answer to this question, transferring it to moral theory: «The question to be asked of moral theory from the standpoint of a theory of creativity does not necessarily challenge the substratum of creativity, but addresses the way morality is rooted in personality» [37, p. 258]. Such questions imply difficulties that present-day concepts of creative society face as well without any theory of morality rooted in the creative action. The latter makes us responsible for what we want to and can create, for

why and how we are going to do this. Any project of creative democracy grows out of the creative action.

The modern embodiment of creative economy is the Achilles heel of creative democracy [24]. A bright proof is R. Florida's book «The new urban crisis» [13], which confirms that those who do not fit in the new elite will inevitably be isolated in cultural ghettos of megapolises. The mass production of creative persons means the reproduction of formatted creativity through the postindustrial infrastructure and its ideology. Discussions around creative economy concepts can follow a new trend if we return to H. Joas's theory of action and try to substantiate from the ethical point of view the legitimacy of implementation of the social project that has been generated by the expanding human claim to creativity.

This attempt to build a bridge between creative action and democratic society is the brightest illustration how far away from the European approach H. Joas moves in his analysis of social reality: «In American thought ideas of creativity are connected with the idea of democracy to an extent far greater than was ever possible in Germany. <...> ...in Germany theories about creativity have always been dominated by an aestheticist ideology of genius» [38, p. 5]. The American approach is more focused on everyday creativity, whereas the European one – on the genius.

This difference in the European and American approaches to human creativity may be noticed in the comparative analysis of R. Florida's theory of creative class and Ch. Landry's theory of creative city. The latter focuses on the European creative urban space as an integrated cultural whole in diverse localised forms and methods of its development by means of cultural geography. The American sociologist directs us to the individual potential of every representative of the creative class enquiring into its nature, sources and principles of development through the lens of economic geography, whereas the British urbanist draws our primary attention to the cultural environment with its advanced infrastructure as the background for the articulation of individual action. In the latter case the creativity of human action is considered substantially as a collective agency reproduced by the creative milieu. These divergent views are crucially determined by different philosophical worldviews of social theorists.

### In quest of contemporary European social theory<sup>12</sup>

The meaning of the term «social theory» remains ambivalent in both social philosophy and sociology. This Anglo-American term has been translated and incorporated into different traditions of teaching the social sciences without acquiring a strict definition [39, p. 27].

In spite of its vagueness, the term remains a fashionable signification of the most relevant interdisciplinary scholarship. The British sociologist G. Delanty tries to explain this turn of the European sociologist's interest from sociological to social theory in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as

<sup>12</sup>The notion «contemporary European social theory» was coined and elaborated by G. Delanty. For more information on this notion, see G. Delanty [39].



«a reaction to the heavily empirical nature of American sociology where theory has generally been understood in neo-positivist terms as hypothesis testing and possibly more broadly a concern with macro-theorising» [39, p. 27]. Contemporary European social theory demonstrates the rebirth of close relationships between the social sciences and the humanities.

This interpretation of social theory and sociology radically differs from an initial view of them at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In spite of the fact that sociology was born in France in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the USA reader was acquainted with the European history of sociology only in 1937 [34], when T. Parsons introduced to the American reader the quintessential thread of the sociological canon<sup>15</sup>. His introduction to European sociology preserved its charismatic status until the middle of 1960s.

In the 1940–60s, the notion of sociology in the USA was firstly and mostly associated with the notion of European social theory. H. Joas argues that T. Parsons simply ignored the American sociological school [40]. He consciously omitted representatives of American sociological thought, though they had already established their own schools by that time (for example, pragmatism and the Chicago School). Probably, they did not fit the story told by T. Parsons from the perspective of highly abstract social thought. As a result, the American sociological thought had been essentially Europeanised by the 1970–80s<sup>14</sup>.

Since then, the European social theory in opposition to the American sociological theory has always pretended to be «more than sociology and to demon-

strate its roots in the humanities and especially in philosophy» [39, p. 28]. Taking into account this intention, the comparison of T. Parsons's introduction to the American reader of the integrated whole of «European social theory» (the term was coined by T. Parsons) and H. Joas's introduction to the European reader of American pragmatism (as distinguished from European pragmatism) is of crucial importance in this context. It traces a gradual development of European social thought from the moment when it was recognised as an integrated whole with its own predicate «European» to the moment when it was more often considered as too abstract and vague in the «practical turn» of the 1990s (see below). The further revival of the American voice in the European social sciences of the 2000s was expressed in empirically grounded practice theories with more clarity and simplicity. This turn may be marked as the beginning of a relative Americanisation (H. Joas's claim) of contemporary social thought all over the world from the perspective of neopragmatism [37–47] or a relative Europeanisation (A. Reckwitz's claim) from the perspective of the practice theory [10; 48–53]. It is not a coincidence that these trends seem to be tightly connected with the formation of a theory of creative society. Following H. Joas's words that American pragmatism is the only philosophy which focuses on the creative nature of the individual's action and intends to understand any human action primarily as a creative one [38, p. 4], it is necessary to raise the question whether it is possible to build a European approach to creative society beyond the (neo)pragmatic paradigm.

### The practical turn versus the practice turn in European social theory

One of the brightest expressions of the European practical turn may be revealed in the emergence of the so-called *theory of practices* in the 1990–2000s [48]. The phenomenon of practice<sup>15</sup> becomes of increasing interest in sociology in general and in social theory in particular. The foundations of practice theory were established initially within the works by T. Schatzki [49], K. Knorr-Cetina and E. von Savigny [50], A. Reckwitz [51] and A. Warde [52]. It draws upon poststructuralism, structuration theory, ethnomethodology, actor-network theory and performativity theory [53].

The authentic turn to the practice theory in the European social sciences of the 2000s was prepared by the French neopragmatist sociology of L. Boltanski [42], L. Thévenot [43] and B. Latour [3]. L. Boltanski and L. Thévenot demonstrated the pragmatic turn from the analysis of subjects and groups to situations and

things, to artefacts and objects themselves. At the same time, European social thought experienced the revival of the interest in American neopragmatism [44–47], which was vividly expressed in H. Joas's works. However, A. Reckwitz [51] refutes any attempt to associate the birth of the practice theory with the neopragmatist movement in European social theory of the 1990s. He claims that the whole tradition of American pragmatism has «a rather loose relation» [51, p. 259] to the practice theory. At the same time, he does not try to refute H. Joas's statement that the German sociological discussion of creativity in the 1990s was shaped by the tradition of American pragmatism, where the idea of creativity had always been discussed in interplay with the idea of American democracy<sup>16</sup> [29]. Moreover, he underlines that the practice theory is deeply enrooted in the philosophical discourse «from Heidegger and

<sup>15</sup>Talcott Parsons's «The structure of social action. A study in social theory with special reference to a group of recent European writers» focuses on the European classical sociological tradition [34].

<sup>14</sup>H. Joas claims that the works by J. Habermas and N. Luhmann became central players in the social sciences in the 1970–80s in Europe and the USA [40].

<sup>15</sup>«Practice is a routinised way of acting, and those pretheoretical assumptions and routines affect how we act, especially how we manage our bodies, handle objects, treat subjects, describe things, and understand the world» [53, p. 662].

<sup>16</sup>J. Dewey's concept of creative democracy was reinvented in R. Reagan's 1966 gubernatorial campaign, which introduced the concept «Creative Society» as a response to the set of L. B. Johnson's programmes «Great Society» [28, p. 208].



Dewey to Deleuze» [10, S. 12]. This final confirmation of the pragmatist influence on the practice theory confirms their close relationships and possible interaction. To highlight this enrootedness in the philosophy of American pragmatism, it is necessary to briefly outline a history of the German reinvention of American creativity in the form of German «Kreativität».

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century Germany creativity was a subject matter of rather Romantic aesthetic debates around the nature of genius [38, p. 5–6], whereas the USA preserved only some motifs of Romantic elitism in the interpretation of situated creativity of the public in the progressive era. The artist as a symbol of the most creative subject was replaced by the engineer and the inventor. H. Joas refers to Th. Veblen's value laden concept of *everyday creativity* [54], which became at that time one of the central notions in the technocratic ideology.

The formation of American sociological thought with its interest in everyday creativity within the Chicago School was tightly bound up with the history of American journalism, urban documentary reporting and Chicago's literary history. H. Joas's brief remark [38, p. 7] on the missing research of the connection between the pragmatist thought and modern architecture in Chicago worth of a special concern nowadays, especially when one tries to enquire into the history of modernity studies.

This pragmatist research interest in everyday creativity was later embodied in a range of applied political programmes. In the 1950–60s, a great amount of scientific institutions and foundations devoted to creativity in the USA were established. Their increasing interest in creativity may be explained with the «Sputnik Shock», when the USA felt that could loose the Space Race because their scientists were insufficiently creative [55]. After World War II, the Anglo-American notion of creativity was introduced to Europe. The notion «Kreativität» emerged in the German language in the 1950s, initially within the humanities, and gradually became quite widespread in use of everyday life, especially in leisure culture and marketing. Its meaning was associated with something what had to compensate the emptiness in personal life, to relieve the individual's stress and anxiety [37, p. 72].

H. Joas criticised this kind of superficial attitude to creativity and intended to develop his own theory aimed at the demonstration of an alternative pragmatist view of everyday creativity in the European context in the 1990s. His theory of creative action had been

built before governments of the first world launched their creative industries policies. Let us briefly consider a historical note on their invention, which highlights a pragmatic approach to their elaboration.

The concept of *creative industries* emerged in the 1990s in the context of Australian and British cultural policies [56]. This term was coined in September 1994 by Australian experts in the information economy, T. Cutler and R. Buckeridge, in the report «Commerce in content: building Australia's international future in interactive multimedia markets» [57]. This document was prepared for the department of industry, science and technology of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation and the Broadband Services Expert Group. At that time R. Buckeridge consulted the government in Australia on the ICT and media industries within an emerging information economy, whereas T. Cutler established his own advisory practice and was appointed soon afterwards deputy chair of the advisory board to the National Office of Information Economy (1997–1998) and chair of the Australian Government Industry Research and Development Board (1996–1998). Their report fuelled in 1994 the Paul Keating Labour Government's policy initiative and the release of the programme «Creative nation: Commonwealth cultural policy»<sup>17</sup>. That is the first clearly articulated cultural policy programme at the federal level in Australia where culture is considered as a key building block of national economy and individual citizenship in the globalised society. The concept of culture in this policy document instrumentally delineated the sectors of «film, television, radio, multimedia, cultural heritage, cultural industries, libraries, indigenous culture, regional cultural outreach and cultural tourism» [58, p. 14].

Despite the fact that the term was coined in Australia, the first explicit use of this notion was in the British Creative Industries Mapping Study<sup>18</sup> [59]. In the late 1990s this concept was introduced to the public by the UK Government's Department for Culture, Media and Sport<sup>19</sup> to signify a field of fruitful interactions between art, science and business at the crossroads of economy and culture<sup>20</sup>.

Meanwhile, anticipating the creative age, H. Joas saw the British attitude to creativity as a unique one. He underlined that a specific understanding and feeling of creativity in the British culture radically differs from the German one: they have never reduced it to the aesthetic field. The very notion of creativity does not seem so natural and positive in the German culture in comparison

<sup>17</sup> Commonwealth of Australia. Creative nation: Commonwealth cultural policy [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/21336/200310110000/www.nla.gov.au/creative.nation/contents.html> (date of access: 10.01.2018).

<sup>18</sup> DCMS. Creative Industries Mapping Document. London: Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2001 [Electronic resource]. URL: [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive\\_2001/ci\\_mapping\\_doc\\_2001.htm](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive_2001/ci_mapping_doc_2001.htm) (date of access: 10.01.2018).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> «Those industries, which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property» ([http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive\\_2001/ci\\_mapping\\_doc\\_2001.htm](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive_2001/ci_mapping_doc_2001.htm)).





with the British context [37, p. 72]. Their way of interpreting creativity opened up wider horizons of its application. H. Joas was able to foresee the practical benefits of this vision. In 1999 [60] he was the first who noticed that the British approach to creativity in the form of the creative industries programme was substantially shaped by the 1960s' American discussion of creativity.

In many attempts to reconstruct the history of the invention of the creative industries concept in the 1990s [56; 61; 62] one could hardly find strong theoretical grounding of national policy strategies devoted to the formation of a new sector of both economic and cultural practices. The same trends in policy making became identifiable at the European level in the late 1990s, when a concept of creative industries shaped a new generation of political programmes devoted to the fostering of economic sustainable development by means of cultural and creative resources. The German sociologist C. Offe considers this situation, full of political reforms without any attempt to provide a scientific

justification within a valid theory by means of sound arguments, as symptomatic of the lack of trust to any theory in the 1990s. He tries to explain the distinctly «a-theoretical» character of the European social sciences at that time with a rapid flow of events without clear principles, concepts and analytical expressions on the way to a «common European home» [63, p. 502]. This pragmatic intention shapes a path from the idea of the European creative industries to the project of creative Europe as a shared «place to create».

The birth of the practice theory in the late 1990s coincided with the birth of European creative policies, intriguing social scientists to reflect on them and to retrospectively explain them by means of new interdisciplinary conceptions. A. Reckwitz was the first among sociologists who revealed in his own theory the interdependence between the practice theory and an emerging theory of creative society, i. e. between a particular modern social theory and a theory of a particular modern society.

### Reckwitz's theory of social practices

A. Reckwitz argues that one of the greatest mistakes would be to think that the formation of theories of society and modernity is determined by social theory. The latter rather directs them to «a particular socio-theoretical fundamental conceptuality» [10, S. 17] of their subject matter. From this perspective, the practice theory intends to delineate the conceptual definability of the creativity dispositif, which may be revealed in processes of culturalisation and aestheticisation in late modernity. The in-depth analysis of everyday creativity in today's society motivates a researcher to reconsider the foundations of social theory and methods of its building in sociology and philosophy.

Social theory cannot develop without sociological theories of modern society. In this regard, the purpose of any sociology is to comprehend society in the modern age and provide the empirical material for further development of social theory in general. Relationships between social theories and theories of society are interdependent but they cannot be described in terms of any strict determinism. The socio-theoretical describability does not determine propositions of the theory of society, it rather makes a free play in-between possible.

The theory of social practices aims at the comprehension of late modern society with the focus on culturalisation and aestheticisation of the social [10, S. 10], going beyond the sociological analysis of its formal rationalisation and functional differentiation. A. Reckwitz seeks to develop both social theory in general and a particular theory of modern society. They are embodied in the forms of the practice theory [10; 51] and an emerging theory of society in the creative age [8]. Within them, he intends to reveal specific features of both the social

reality (die soziale Realität) and the societal reality (die gesellschaftliche Realität) in late modernity.

According to A. Reckwitz, the German sociology came to a «dead end» in the 1990s. A new path out of this crisis could be found in works of French social and cultural theories: in the range of French authors he outlines P. Bourdieu, M. Foucault, B. Latour and L. Boltanski. Another source of inspiration he finds in Anglo-American cultural anthropology, sociological and cultural studies of the media, space and subjectivity. Employing these theoretical perspectives, he tries to go beyond the formal rational analysis of the social and defines his praxis theory as «a materialistic cultural theory, or rather a cultural-theoretical materialism» [10, S. 11]. This analysis focuses on the corporeal, the bodily aspects of activity, its affective nature and sense perceptions, which shape experience and reveal hybrid cultural orders, the constitutive meaning of things and artefacts for social praxis, including media technologies and space constellations. The praxis theory introduces an approach which is able to respond to challenges of the creative age by means of praxeological sensibility to a new type of the social in a network of cultural and material elements. It demonstrates the antagonism between rationalisation and aestheticisation processes in the orientation towards the social regime of authentic, experimental, affective singularities in opposition to formalism, scientism and effectivity of the past. In this context the concept of *singularities* signifies objects and subjects with the claim to the special [9]. Social subjects and groups are replaced with singularities which ought to participate in the fight for attention in the creative age.



If for H. Joas creativity is a universal trait of any human action, for A. Reckwitz it is rather a socially, culturally and historically situated product. The latter view moves from social theory to a theory of modernity within historical and cultural sociology, where creativity is considered as situated in specific practices of particular cultural space and historical time [64, p. 128]. Simultaneously, on the way from A. Reckwitz's article «Toward a theory of social practices: a development in culturalist theorising» [51] to his monography «Society of singularities» [9] becomes apparent a gradual turn from the sociology of culture to socio-philosophical theories of practice. This turn is shaped with diverse theoretical perspectives, to mention just a few of them: J. Dewey's pragmatism, H. Joas's neopragmatism, M. Foucault's poststructuralism, P. Bourdieu's theory of practice, J. Butler's theory of performativity and B. Latour's actor-network theory.

To support his theoretical position in the history of contemporary sociological thought [8; 11], A. Reckwitz refers to L. Boltanski's and È. Chiapello's «The new spirit of capitalism» [42] with its focus on the aesthetic logic of late capitalism's culture. A turn to aesthetic capitalism took place after World War II. Since then the main product of manufacture and consumption seems to be signs and symbols. Following the French neopragmatist analysis of the aesthetic field, the German sociologist reveals the essential shift in the interpretation of creativity in the 1960–70s' counterculture, when its social, cultural and political performances were subjected to art criticism.

With a portion of ironical skepticism, A. Reckwitz distances from L. Boltanski's and E. Chiapello's diagnosis of the late modern spirit in terms of «wicked capitalism», which is totally penetrating and dominating the whole aesthetic sphere. It is hardly possible to claim that aesthetics has come down to the market. On the contrary, economy seems to be totally subjected to aestheticisation processes. However, A. Reckwitz does not try to oppose them, rather he attempts to concilia-

te them by substantiating close relationships between *homo aestheticus* and *homo oeconomicus*. His interpretation of them within the practice theory focuses on the corporeality and performativity of the subjectivation process in heterogeneous formations of cultural orders.

Leaving irony aside, the German sociologist reveals the contradictory totality of the late capitalist creativity dispositif and its imperative. The advancement of the latter is expressed in the form of social expectations according to which every person wants and ought to be creative. He enquires into this imperative through three main elements of the creativity dispositif: «The culturalisation of the metropolis, the creative as an advanced form of subjectivisation, and finally the special relevance of practices in the artistic field for the cultivation of aesthetic capitalism» [10, S. 17]. The desire for authenticity, originality, novelty and surprise transforms into a compulsion and a demand held against art, science, education and business. The mass reproduction of the artistic lifestyle leads to the increasing escapism into the world of communication, marketing, design and architecture. The picture of the creative city with its luxury lofts, centers of contemporary art and cultural quarters for tourists is formatted with the model of the consumption place. The public space is reproduced in the form of the marketing place.

The aesthetic regime of consumption in the urban space delivers to the public an illusion of creative atmosphere. Meanwhile, the total culturalisation and implied aestheticisation of social space leads to new forms of social discrimination and its anxiety of increasing precarisation. However, individuals still seek to find an improved image of wicked capitalism in their own creative spirit. All these contradictory processes, which illustrate the gradual emergence of a new type of reality, need further exploration and critical analysis within social theory. The latter has to explain them and predict their possible long-run consequences, to introduce instruments of healing negative effects of the creativity imperative.

## Conclusion

The creative turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in European social theory has revealed its specific features within the research of praxis in its different versions. Among them may be outlined H. Joas's theory of creative action and A. Reckwitz's analysis of creative society in the practice theory. In comparison with the American research of creative economy and its geography, the European social thought focuses more on the culturally embodied and historically situated normativity of everyday

creative practices, their valuable forms shaping individual and communal activities as being meaningful, universally valid and justifiable. The attempt to reach a balance between discourse analysis and empirical research in the practice theory directs its representatives to the elaboration of methodological foundations for a more relevant, robust and dynamic social theory *per se*, which has to answer creative challenges of praxis in its diverse manifestations.

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