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FLEXIBLE TIME AND NEW FORMS OF CONTROL

In production conditions modern human being is forced to live under the laws of the digital age. Within it corporate ideology obliges to sacrifice for the common good. Migration flows mix borders of fixed mass. It becomes moveable and may not only change its social status, but also may be a threat of destabilization. Mass migration of people has already demonstrated incapability of power to control society, for whom time is a more significant life category than space. The digital age has created new forms of control through networking. Flexible time becomes a form of working time, but that does not mean that person became free in work. Flexitime is more a bifurcation point of social disorder that causes earnest attention on the part of company's management. Personal time becomes work time. And, therefore, private time is already a subject to control. There is a new update of trust and confidence out of the office space. New rules are added to organization of labor. Not vertical, but the horizontal forms of professional communication. But social networks are not only space for realization of professionalism, but a means of control.

Keywords: Flexible Time, Mimicry, Freelancer, Digital Nomadism

1. Introduction

Modern economy relies on labor sold by a person. Therefore, nowadays not only profession itself, but the form of its presentation together with leaders is a sale item. At present, attachment to a workplace is more like slavery than the opportunity to develop. A person is forced to live under the laws of corporate ideology, which requires sacrifices for the common good. Individualism is replaced by commonality. It stimulates production and promotes rapid job burnout of an individual. And later results a wish to leave the system. That is why many companies are looking to invest in projects which are:

- 1) local;
- 2) nongovernmental;
- 3) of short duration (short-term).

Space and time here are decisive in order of importance. Those, who have space as a priority, are more often guided by a conservative approach. And people, appreciating time more than space, are attracted by liberal values.

The ability to migrate by virtue of professional skills and career change actualizes the role of poleis, where people come into communication as equals. And issues of democracy conditions, relations with executive agencies and administrative prescriptions are addressed in addition to professional relationship. The disputes emerge and team strategies are produced. Thus, public space, appropriated earlier by media, goes through reconstruction. Z. Bauman said: "progress" implies not any history attributes, but self-confidence of present. The deepest and, perhaps, the only sense of progress is embodied in the feeling that time is on our side, because events are taking place precisely under our influence"¹.

Today, one of the most common forms to represent a profession is positioning of social significance. Connection between professional areas and civic stand, such as environmental protection or animal rights protection, make labor more attractive sector. Therefore those, who did not understand these rules of the game, now are on the brink of extinction. Let's take, for example, a repairman of clockworks. This profession becomes superfluous in electronics market, where every gadget has a built-in time of different continents. However, despite the fact that mechanics is pushed out of the sphere of production, there is a demand for mechanical things and people who are able to repair them. Positioning of a repairman in the status of time controller and the legend about global conspiracy of watchmakers makes it a niche profession, designed not for mass demand.

Changing of labor fundamentals leads to the issue of control. For authorities it may be a challenge in governing. Priority in time spent for labor increases migration flows. This, in turn, mixes borders of fixed

¹ Бауман, З. (2005). *Индивидуализированное общество*. Москва, 96.

mass. It becomes moveable and may not only change its social status, but also may be a threat of destabilization. Therefore, the ability of authorities to control moveable mass of the digital age is the subject for consideration of the phenomenon of labor through the prism of time flexibility.

2. Material and methods

The research results obtained on the basis of questionnaire survey, conducted in February-March 2016 in Ukraine. The main purpose was to determine is there a control in distance freelancing and what forms it has. There were interviewed 100 participants aged 19 to 50, who identified themselves as remote freelancers. Among them, 14.3% – men and 85,7% – women.

3. Results

Of the proposed types of work 67.9% specified text writing and processing it into computer programs (designers, photographers, front-end developers). Almost half of respondents (46.4%) indicated combination of a permanent job and freelancing.

On the question: *"If you are working remotely how you are controlled?"* The following responses were received:

- calls;
- reporting correspondence by e-mail;
- contacting via viber, skype;
- communication via private correspondence in social networks.

The average duration of remote working is about 3 hours per day.

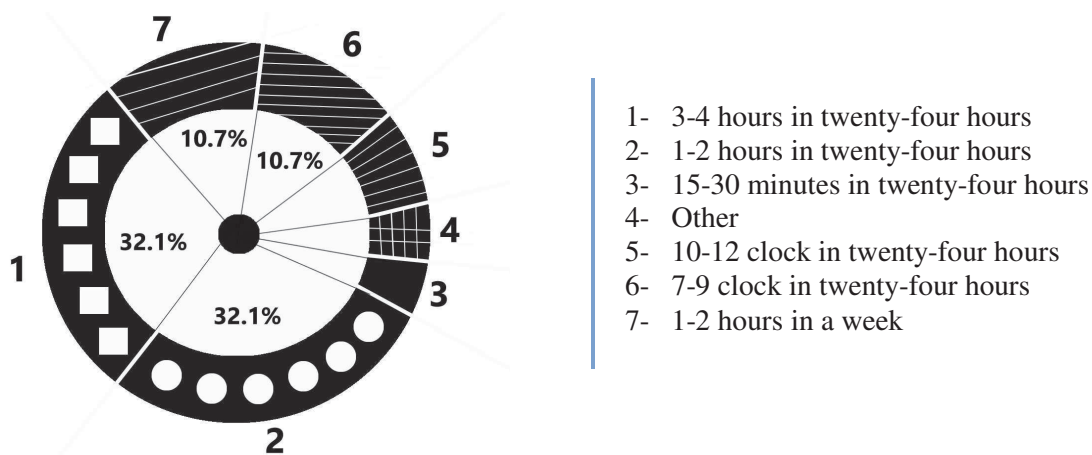


Fig. 1. Estimate the business hours of your remote work?

It is noteworthy that on the next question: *"Did you have a career promotion?"* among the proposed possible answers an attempt was made to understand what respondents meant by career promotion in such working conditions (1nd and 4th answers).

- a) Yes, I did. I was invited to go to work in the office in offline.
- b) No, I did not. I was invited to go to work in the office in offline.

It turned out that the survey participants understood career development as a stable employment offline (Figure 2). 7.1% replied that they were invited to work in the office on a permanent job as a proof of their personal professional development (the answer to the second question).

Freelance and digital nomadism differ by displacement in space, which is typical for digital nomadism. While a freelancer indeed can work remotely, but his displacement perimeter is stable. In addition, a freelancer can work offline and still have an online job. Digital nomad relies on remote work only. Many organizations are engaged in remote work after labor time. And it is often stipulated when hiring. A person comes home after work and starts working again, in constant mode (site support, its renewal, network activity). In this case *time* is the basis for choice of employment, not space. That again brings us back to liberal values.

Another property of freelancers – they do not waste time on television. It is excluded from life (unless, of course, it is a job). World view and thinking are constructed out of a different media format. Here you can consider the issue of media literacy of population and how it affects the level of national

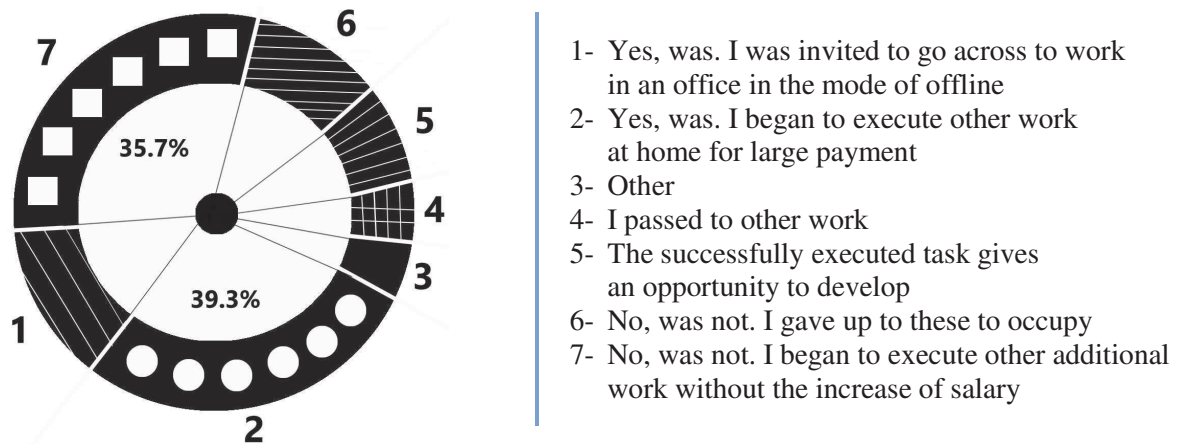


Fig. 2. If you long time executed work at home, whether you had career advancement?

security. Ukrainian scientist Tetiana Krainikova notes that media competence affects the level of career growth in general. For this a transition from first to second level of consumerism is required:

- a) on the first level media consumer will be provided with all conditions to meet the simplest needs;
- b) on the second level information interests will motivate external factors – qualitative media and media education activities ¹.

If a person is a freelancer due to demand for their skills, so they are already competent in communication matters. The ability to build relationships, to negotiate, to be responsible for work, to take own decisions and others are the qualities that a priori included in remuneration. Therefore, attitude towards television products is very selective. High demands for self-education exclude everything that is pseudo. They are beyond information wars. They have too much responsibility and work to get involved into network disputes. Such a person is difficult to manipulate and even harder to keep under control.

On the other hand, as far as a freelancer works at the computer, this work lies in development and administration of information. As a professional user, it has both visual and verbal information from. As a potential digital nomad, a freelancer can work with digital technology. They have skills to transmit information at any conditions. In the paper "How to become a digital nomad?" the most common professions are listed:

- a) Programming and Web Development;
- b) Design in all its possible forms;
- c) Tutoring, counseling, distance learning (voice and video via Skype);
- d) System administration;
- e) Photo and video shooting (photostocks, visiting photoshoots);
- f) Image processing: retouching, restoration, etc.;
- g) Text writing, search engine optimization and other adjacent activities;
- h) and many other... ².

Therefore, the forms of control over such experts are different.

- Social control at the level of consumer demand;
- Economic control over behavior of executor of work, for example, at the planning level.

"The denial of the fact that we have some planning, helped to hide this control of even those who are brought under control," – said John Galbraith [6:45].

William J. Mitchell, analyzing contemporary society in everyday life under the influence of digital technologies in 2003 noted that "today, the lack of a permanent home ceases to be a fundamental characteristic of this condition, giving way to a lack of access rights" [11]. Real space of existence is forced out by significance of virtual space. And if, for some reason, there is a loss of code, password or vanished mobile communications, the loss of access rights will become catastrophic. There is, as the urbanist notes, a shift of subjectivity. Man is still inseparable from their networks, but their condition do not fetter as

¹ Krainikova T. (2016). *How to help media ignorance?* [Yak zaradyty media bezghramotnosti?].

² How to become a digital nomad? (2014).

before. If we turn to McLuhan's understanding of media body, here also networks expand a human. Networking body interweaves with other bodies. "I am in touch – therefore I am" – concludes William J. Mitchell.

Symbols, which are coded in our communications, also lose their space and go in a journey. Movie goes beyond the limits of a cinema and migrates to other screens; paintings by famous artists became screensavers on computer desk, and flags that should flutter in the squares are captured in the symbolism of the party.

4. Discussion

Flexibility as a flaw

Phenomenon of flexible time (flexitime), according to R. Sennett forms working day of a mosaic of people, each with their individual schedule. However, this time is also taken under control. "If "flexitime" is a reward to an employee, so it makes him/her even more dependent on given institution" [12:82]¹. Fear of losing control over a worker, which is out of sight causes suspicion that this prerogative is used for personal purposes. Therefore, a hard deadline is implemented, composed of not only a period for execution of work, but also control over the time of executor that is even more rigid.

Understanding human labor as a commodity item, the question about self-organization of working time arises. In the opinion of R. Sennett, social norms prescribe the value of labor and oppose it to dependency. And if linear relationship to evil (dependency) and good (labor) was formed through this prism for one generation, that the younger generation has flexibility towards these concepts. Digital age leaves its mark in this respect.

R. Sennett notes that flexibility as a decent quality of a human has already been promoted by J. Locke, J. S. Mill, A. Smith, D. Hume. As the virtue of entrepreneurship, perhaps in the past centuries this quality contributed to survival. However, the scientist says that "aversion towards bureaucratic routine and search for flexibility rather produced new structures of power control, than created conditions to set us free"².

According to R. Sennett, for modern humanity work has lost its meaning in shaping a personality. "... Depersonalization of personality, its estrangement from important decisions, anonymity of orders and so on – are procreation of a routine bureaucratic system" ³. Free production economy does not exclude instability. Instability is the norm and order of self-organization of labor. Any employee of a company must be prepared for layoffs, dismissal and unemployment. The digital age has already developed a mechanism of behavior in conditions of instability. The information itself, which is now available in the form of information noise designs instability. The loss of clarity and logic in messages develop at a consumer not only uncertainty but also a skill to act in conditions of instability. This is a classic scheme of order out of disorder. Or, as an option – a way out of chaotic bureaucratic labor system. "Modern society has raised a revolt against routine bureaucratic time, which can paralyze production, or the government, or other institutions" ⁴.

Z. Bauman asks a question: "Is there a place for politics in individualized society?". The author separates concepts of "power" and "politics". Power is moving, but politics stands still. "Everyone is potentially redundant or replaceable and therefore everyone is vulnerable; moreover, any social status, no matter how high and powerful it may seem, is ultimately nominal, even privileges are fragile and under threat" ⁵. On the rate of change management process, as a system, lags behind people who work there. Therefore conformity strategy for people of the digital age is a determining factor of their life position.

However, do not discard the mimicry of power. According to M. Foucault, power does not operate under obsolete signs of death, transgression, confessional and saeculum blood, but under the sign of life. Power adapts to the day. Thus, changes in organization of labor (as well as in self-organization) result in new forms of control. Here chaos in movement, caused by moving of labor in space, is put in order by the logic of power. It gets the right to violence.

G. Vattimo interprets modern society as a society of universal communication. Mass media denote this society not as enlightened, but as more complex and chaotic. The author sees the hope for salvation of society in chaos. "Emancipation here is rather in helplessness and isolation from soil, which in our time are extrication of differences, local elements and all that we can collectively call "dialect" ⁶.

¹ Сеннетт, Р. (2004). *Коррозия характера*. Новосибирск, 82.

² Сеннетт, Р. (2004). *Коррозия характера*. Новосибирск, 61.

³ Сеннетт, Р. (2004). *Коррозия характера*. Новосибирск, 11.

⁴ Сеннетт, Р. (2004). *Коррозия характера*. Новосибирск, 33.

⁵ Бодрийяр, Ж. (2000). *Прозрачность зла*. Москва, 63.

⁶ Ваттимо, Дж. (2002). *Прозрачное общество*. Москва, 16.

But as soon as understanding of chaos comes, that leads it to ordering, but rupture communication itself. It turns into a set of local rationalities. The world gets divided into separate communities that obtain shape and become recognizable at the level of pronunciation and vision. For example, ethnic minorities or sex minorities are entitled to be heard at the moment when media write about them. And others happen not to be heard. The media, therefore, determine the status of existence through pronunciation. As R. Debray points out, now a new version of Descartes' "I think" is more appropriate: "I am spoken about – therefore I am". Local rationalism in this sense gives a visible form for existence. Semiotic codes make previously hidden elements visible. However, continuing the thought of G. Vattimo, there is the reverse side of this rationality. By giving semantic value to local phenomena of society, the ability to reading can be different.

a) Signs may coincide and do not coincide meaning of different local entities (e.g., an image of multi-colored balloons can be understood as a birthday, and as the presence of LGBT ideology).

b) The ability to multiple reading develops and that requires a broad knowledge of different cultures and languages.

And if for us it is a threat to different interpretations and understanding, to G. Vattimo salvation of society is in emancipated "effect of dialects' intermixture". "To live in this diverse world is to have an experience of freedom, to feel it as a continuing oscillation between belonging and being lost", – said the researcher¹.

Thus, communication gap in global information exchange and its formation in local entities activates new forms of control, where the media assume powers of creating multiple narratives. "Silence is banished from screens, banished from communication. Images supplied by the media (and texts are similar to images), never fall silent: images of messages should nonstop follow each other" – writes J. Baudrillard².

The paradox of modern society is that reality is not understood as a kind of objectivity. The media point to a causal relationship, which stand for interests of specific subjects. Interweaving of variety of interpretations collide with each other picture of the world, destroying it at the base.

5. Conclusions

The digital age has created new forms of control through networking. Flexible time becomes a form of working time, but that does not mean that person became free in work. Flexitime is more a bifurcation point of social disorder that causes earnest attention on the part of company's management. Personal time becomes work time. And, therefore, private time is already a subject to control. There is a new update of trust and confidence out of the office space. Interesting were the answers of respondents who had to determine personal level of trust towards their employer.

a. Students stated that they trust an employer more than he trusts them (on a 10-point scale, 10 to 7);

b. not-students identified trust to employer lower than their own (on a 10-point scale, the average rating of trust towards an employer 7, and employer's confidence in work of executor – 9).

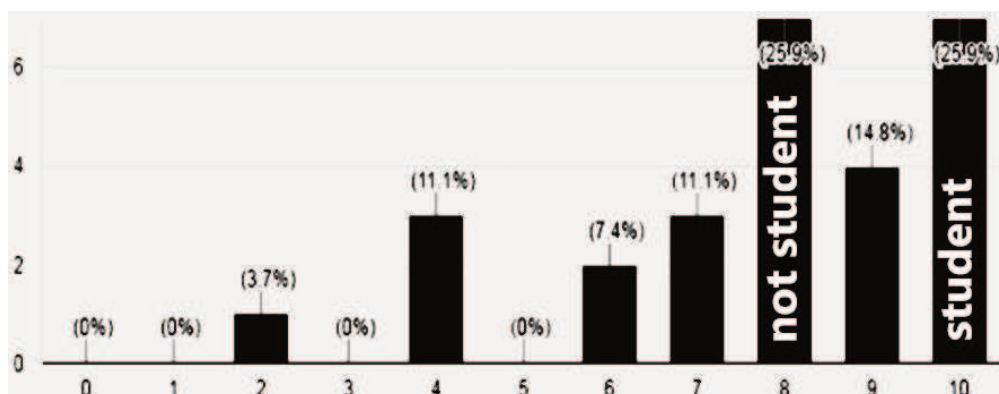


Fig. 3. You trust the leader at your remote work?

A flexible time changes understanding of the team. The hierarchy of the rule gets violated. There are people who are the face of the team, but there are also key performers, from which the result of work depends. The question of leadership changes shape. Those firms may deal exclusively with visual

¹ Ваттимо, Дж. (2002). *Прозрачное общество*. Москва, 18.

² Бодрийяр, Ж. (2000). *Прозрачность зла*. Москва, 21.

presentation through its personification. Real team players remain in shadow. Mimicry of a team is formed and the form does not match the content.

New rules are added to organization of labor. Not vertical, but the horizontal forms of professional communication. It reduces time for excessive harmonization and foster responsibility for their decisions. This gives rise to new criteria for working as a team.

Pros:

- a. flexibility;
- b. conformism;
- c. improving of trust relationships;
- d. ability to self-organization.

Cons:

- a. development of truant habits;
- b. acquisition of the right for being late;
- c. uncontrolled workspace, where isolation in production is formed. It creates different levels of communication that promotes development of different forms of control.

Freelancers so as digital nomads, form a new level of media consumption. Creativity as a professional factor allows them to reach out of limits of work. These people become active participants in social projects. On the question "Are there any cases when distant work prompted you to engage in volunteering? If yes, give an example of your participation in one of the projects", 85.7% said yes. These people actively participated in Streams, SMM-promotion of social ideas, blogging, development of urban projects, etc. The skill to use flexible time for civic purposes is developing.

Digital nomadism, in spite of the freedom of movement and ability to change trajectory of movement in space, is increasingly become fixed. They are not so difficult to find, as it is not difficult to determine the product of their work. As William J. Mitchell says: "In contrast to ancient nomads, wireless cyborg lives in a world where positions and trajectories are always identifiable" ¹.

Social networks are not only space for realization of professionalism, but a means of control. Publicity of information and reaction of followers to it is an indicator of performance. The circle, controlling participants in the network, expands (from employer to employer's friends and wife, as their personal opinion can affect performance analysis).

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