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Article

Development of The Concept of Creative Labor and The Formation of The Creative Class

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Abstract: This article discusses the issues of the development of the creative economy as one of the key directions in economic theory and policy over the past thirty years in the context of the digital economy and information technologies. Despite the continuous growth of the creative class and government measures to support the creative sector, the share of the creative economy in the overall global economy remains steadily around 3%. The goal of this article is to identify the contradictions and factors that limit the development of the creative class. The arguments and conclusions of the article are primarily based on a political economy approach. The main sources of information for the research are statistical data databases. The theoretical and empirical conclusions of the research show that the increase in the number of creative class representatives is not equivalent to its qualitative development; that the statistical measurement of the creative class through employment in creative industries significantly distorts the concept of creative labor and greatly underestimates the actual number of creative professionals; that the uneven development of the creative class among countries is explained, on one hand, by economic inequality and the migration of intellectual resources from developing countries to more developed centers, and on the other hand; that uniting creative professionals into a single category has no economic basis, as the socio-economic stratification is still incomplete; that the creative nature of labor under capitalism does not eliminate the alienation of surplus value, but rather the exploitation of creative labor takes on a new form – the alienation of intellectual property rights and the acquisition of intellectual rent.

Keywords: Creative Class, Creative Professionalism, Professions, Human Capital, Investments, Creative Worker, Innovation, Concept

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1. Introduction

The development of the concept of creative labor and the emergence of the creative class, as discussed by the author, undeniably reflects some of the most significant transformations taking place in the global economy today. In the current era, rapid advances in digital technologies, artificial intelligence, and innovation are reshaping various sectors across the world. Within this dynamic landscape, the role of creative labor is becoming increasingly prominent. This shift is especially evident in creative industries such as design, information technology, the arts, advertising, and related fields. Creative labor represents more than just a byproduct of technological progress; it signifies a broader process of expanding human creative capacity. The creative class is a direct result of this process. It includes not only workers traditionally associated with art and culture but also professionals from the fields of technology, management, and marketing. Individuals within the creative class contribute to societal development by generating and applying innovative ideas and approaches in their work [1]. The formation of the creative class

requires a number of social and economic changes. To ensure its effective functioning, adjustments in the education system, adaptability of labor markets, and the widespread use of digital tools and platforms are essential. Furthermore, the activities of the creative class can play a key role in addressing social challenges, generating new employment opportunities, and fostering sustainable economic growth.However, the rise of creative labor and the formation of a creative class are not without their challenges. Workers in this category often face uncertainties such as unstable employment conditions, irregular working hours, and high levels of stress. Additionally, as the demand for specialized knowledge and skills in creative fields grows, access to these opportunities may become limited to certain social groups, potentially exacerbating existing social inequalities [2]. Theoretical perspectives on the formation of the creative class have been developed by leading scholars such as J. Ben-Porath, A. Marshall, L. Turo, T. Sakaya, U. Daisard, G. Becker, T. Schultz, R. Florida, K. Mellander, E. Currid-Halkett, K. Stolarick, and M. Lazzarato. Among Russian researchers, contributions have come from I.T. Korogodin, D.A. Shevchenko, A.O. Sergeeva, M.D. Cherkashin, L.L. Redko, A.V. Buzgalin, A.I. Kolganov, O. Kolesnikova, I.N. Shafranskaya, E.B. Mostovaya, and V.L. Inozemtsev, who have explored the subject through various academic studies. In Uzbekistan, the theoretical development of the concept of creative labor and the formation of the creative class has been addressed by national scholars such as Academician Q.X. Abdurakhmonov, A. Vakhobov, G.Q. Abdurakhmonova, S.A. Bozorova, Sh.F. Shadiev, O.S. Dusmukhamedov , S.Sh. Akbarova , and others, who have conducted research in this field.In international economic literature, scholars like M. Hoyman and K. Faricy have explored the conceptual distinctions between “human capital,” “creative class,” and “social capital,” particularly in their work titled *Investigating the Creative Class, Social Capital, and Human Capital Theories* [3]. Russian economist V.L. Inozemtsev, in his studies on societal development, emphasizes the transition from industrial to post-industrial society, in which material labor is gradually replaced by creative activity [4]. A.V. Buzgalin and A.I. Kolganov similarly argue that the foundation of societal progress lies in specific forms of human activity, which may take the form of labor or creativity depending on the stage of development. Among contemporary Uzbek economists, O.S. Dusmukhamedov has conducted in-depth research on the emergence of the creative class in Uzbekistan, offering quantitative assessments of the share of the population engaged in creative industries within the national economy [5].

2. Materials and Methods

This This study employs a combination of dialectical, systemic, integrative, and synergetic approaches, as well as a range of classical scientific methods including economic analysis, logical reasoning, scientific abstraction, synthesis, modeling of economic processes and systems, induction and deduction, comparative analysis, generalization, and classification [6]. Specifically, the following methods have been applied in the course of the research:

a. Analysis and Diagnosis: To assess the development of creative labor and the creative class, it is necessary to analyze the potential of the modern workforce. This includes evaluating workers’ creative and technological competencies alongside the environments in which they operate.
b. Strategic Planning: A comprehensive strategic plan is needed to promote the development of the creative class. Such a plan should involve reforms in the education system, the mastery and application of new technologies, and the expansion of opportunities in creative sectors [7].
c. Resource Mobilization: The growth of creative labor and the creative class depends on the effective mobilization of key resources—financial, human, and technological. Public-private partnerships play a critical role in this process.

d. Production and Monitoring: Enhancing the productivity of creative labor requires continuous monitoring of production processes and outcomes. This includes observing the work of creative professionals, integrating their feedback, and implementing advanced technologies.

3. Results

Over the past three decades, the concept of creative labor has shifted from an obscure and revolutionary idea to one of the most actively discussed topics in economic theory. This evolution has inevitably influenced strategic priorities in economic policymaking. However, despite its growing theoretical significance, statistics indicate that the contribution of the creative economy to global GDP remains relatively modest—only about 3%. This article aims to explore the reasons behind the gap between theoretical frameworks and practical implementation, and to analyze the main contradictions involved in the formation of the creative class. Broadly speaking, the systematic study of human potential in the economy began in the second half of the 20th century, when economic theory began to shift its focus toward the development of human capacity [8]. The works of G. Becker and T. Schultz, for example, introduced a groundbreaking perspective on the economic role of the individual. At the turn of the 21st century, this focus expanded toward the creative economy, as explored by scholars such as C. Landry, R. Florida, and D. Howkins. Today, there is little doubt that, alongside technological advancement, human development and creative labor should be central to economic policy. In this regard, R. Florida's theory of the creative class—emphasizing the integration of human and creative capital—stands as a compelling model. Florida's research, together with that of his co-authors (K. Stolarick, K. Mellander, E. Currid-Halkett, among others) , is based on mainstream economic theory. In contrast, another group of researchers adopts a political-economic perspective, including M. Lazzarato, Ya. Grigorova, A. Buzgalin, A. Kolganov, and Z. Khabibullina [9]. The former approach tends to frame the creative class in a positive light, focusing on its definition, composition, and growth, while analyzing incentives and privileges. The latter group, however, addresses deeper issues of labor exploitation, the commodification of creativity, and the involvement of creative workers in symbolic production.In this paper, the author attempts to bridge the gaps between these two schools of thought. The main goal is to identify and explain the contradictions and limitations that hinder the development of the creative class. Specific objectives include: clarifying the origins of these contradictions, evaluating the accuracy of the "class" category, classifying the barriers to creative class growth, and investigating the nature of creative labor exploitation [10]. The creative class is analyzed as a productive force and a social factor within the contemporary stage of capitalism, while the economic foundations of creative labor—along with its associated tensions and formation patterns—form the core subject of this research.Several contemporary studies, including the author's own work, have addressed these themes to varying degrees. Critical reevaluations of the "creative class" category and the modern understanding of creative labor can be found in the works of A. Buzgalin and A. Kolganov , as well as T. Stepanova [11]. Other scholars—such as M. Ikegaya, K. Debbej, S. Lyana, Ts. Vana, K. Luchai, V. Cattivelli, and A. Stavinogi—have focused on the segmentation of creative labor markets in different countries, examining the causes and consequences of migration among creative professionals in the modern context.In the field of economic theory, the study of creativity has followed two primary directions: one stemming from the concepts of the creative economy and creative class developed in the international literature, and the other emerging from the work of scholars in Uzbekistan [12]. It is worth noting that the first scientific attempts to analyze creative labor originated within the Marxist school of economic thought.

4. Discussion

At first glance, the division of scholarly approaches to the theory of creative labor may appear to be based on regional criteria or the authors' affiliation with specific schools of economic thought. In reality, however, the differentiation is more deeply rooted in the methodological principles applied in the analysis. Representatives of the neoclassical approach view the creative class as a novel phenomenon of modern society and "discover" its quantitative and qualitative features through empirical observation. On the other hand, proponents of the neo-Marxist school examine creative labor systematically within the context of specific socio-economic conditions [13]. Early interdisciplinary studies aimed at understanding the essence of creative labor often began with the concept of "general labor." This form of labor is inherently social and generative rather than merely reproductive. As Karl Marx noted, "a distinction must be made between general and social labor. Both have their role in the production process and may interchange, but they are fundamentally different. General labor is any scientific work, invention, or discovery, resulting from either the cooperation of contemporaries or the cumulative efforts of previous generations." This concept aligns closely with today's definition of creative labor, emphasizing its collective, knowledge-based nature [6].n the 1970s and 1980s, social philosophy began to interpret general labor as intellectual labor, particularly in the field of science. During this time, early theories regarding a "new class" also emerged [14]. E. Gouldner proposed a framework for Western society's new structural composition, identifying three classes: the traditional bourgeoisie or capitalist elite, the proletariat, and a newly emerging class of intellectuals. He viewed this new class as a revolutionary force capable of addressing the contradictions of capitalist societies. Similarly, D. Bell argued that in post-industrial societies, this new class would become dominant, functioning as advisors, experts, and technocrats at the political level [15]. The increasing influence of science across all sectors of social life has enabled this technocratic elite to attain leadership status, not only in professional domains but also in public administration. This shift indicates a relocation of power towards managers and scientists, who actively participate in decision-making and possess advanced knowledge and technologies [16]. Russian scholar V.L. Inozemtsev, in his studies on societal development, emphasizes that in post-industrial society, material labor is progressively being replaced by creative labor. He posits an intriguing hypothesis: once creativity becomes dominant, the concept of exploitation loses its traditional meaning. Drawing on Marx's framework, he argues that exploitation arises only when both capitalists and workers strive to maximize their respective gains. In contrast, creative workers are motivated not solely by economic interests, but also by the desire for self-expression and fulfillment. Thus, labor becomes a medium for realizing personal creative potential, rendering classical exploitation obsolete. A.V. Buzgalin and A.I. Kolganov support this perspective, emphasizing that at the core of societal development lies human activity, which manifests as labor or creativity depending on the stage of development. However, their conclusions on exploitation diverge. They argue that exploitation has not disappeared but has instead adapted to new modes of production. According to Buzgalin, in the current reality, exploitation has transformed: individuals are now subordinated to capital through their personalities, not just as labor resources. If the main means of production is information and workers are required to express personal traits, then the relationship between owner and worker evolves into capital's dominance over the worker's identity through the commodification of creativity. S.D. Bodrunov extends this line of thinking by suggesting that a society geared toward creativity necessitates a transformation of production conditions. Within his frameworks of the "second-generation industrial society" and "noonomics," material production increasingly demands knowledge-intensive processes [17]. Over time, labor in repetitive production will be fully automated, and all remaining labor will take on a creative nature. These ideas align with forecasts about a new scientific-technical revolution driven by NBICS-technologies (nano-, bio-, information, cognitive, and social technologies), which

are expected to propel society to a new technological stage. In this context, creative activity is defined as work aimed at generating original ideas and innovations, while foresight activity involves anticipating professional trends and designing future strategies. An analysis of foreign economic literature reveals several critical perspectives on the creative class concept. R. Florida proposes policies to attract and incentivize creative workers, but often overlooks the fact that many of these individuals already belong to the middle or upper-income classes. This can lead to an inequitable allocation of resources, marginalizing low-income groups. Scholars such as M. Bonte and S. Musterd also express concern about the social consequences of creative class expansion, noting that the growing importance of higher education and talent-focused policies may deepen social stratification between "creative" and "non-creative" groups. Such dynamics risk reinforcing divisions between individuals with high and low levels of education and between creative and non-creative workers, exacerbating existing inequalities. These critiques suggest that while the creative class concept may promote economic growth, its social consequences require more careful consideration. Low-skilled laborers and disadvantaged communities may face increased risks unless policies are designed to ensure equitable distribution of opportunities and resources. Florida, in many of his empirical studies, illustrates a seemingly straightforward chain of effects: attracting creative professionals to a region → stimulating economic growth → increasing employment → accelerating innovation and its adoption. Creative thinking, therefore, becomes a key driver of national development, particularly among youth. Over time, this process may contribute to the gradual disappearance of non-creative professions. Florida also emphasizes the importance of attracting creative individuals to specific regions as a strategy for accelerating regional development. He introduces the "3Ts" formula: Talent, Technology, and Tolerance. He argues that a diverse and culturally vibrant environment plays a crucial role in drawing creative workers. Uzbek economist O.S. Dusmukhamedov develops this idea further, stating that the key strength of the creative economy lies in knowledge, with information as its primary resource and innovation as its main product. According to him, the concept of the creative economy integrates related terms such as the information economy, knowledge economy, and innovation economy. However, some scholars criticize the theory for being speculative and lacking sufficient empirical validation.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the main theoretical and empirical studies on the creative class have been reviewed. The article defines the concept of the "creative class," including scientists, intellectuals, technocrats, and artists who generate intangible assets and contribute to economic efficiency. The creative class is structured around professional affiliation, encompassing individuals who solve complex problems, demonstrate independent thinking, and possess advanced education.International experience shows that the income of creative workers is often twice as high as that of those in the service sector. Therefore, fostering creative education and state support for creative sectors are crucial in Uzbekistan. The country is witnessing the emergence of a talented generation with strong creative potential, making it imperative to channel their abilities into the production and monetization of creative goods and services for the benefit of society and the economy.Creativity is the ability to generate novel and original ideas, think outside the box, and find effective solutions to challenges. Creative thinking represents a form of revolutionary, yet constructive reasoning. Supporting the ideas and perspectives of creative individuals is essential, as leadership in society is often driven by such individuals. Today, most societal leaders are characterized by their capacity for creative thought.

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