

SHOPPING MALLS AS A FACTOR OF RADICALIZATION OF CONSUMPTION

Consumption get used to be studied by economics as a condition of achievement of producer's goals, but gradually it turned to be an object of the study of different, and specifically philosophical, sciences. People have always consumed, at the same time none of previous era has been connected with the notion “consumption” defined as a type of relations forming specific culture, a system of especially materialistic norms and values, the basis of which is the acquisition of goods and their usage as symbols of social status and success.

The very stage of mature capitalism is the time of birth of a consumer society, in which individual consumption is deeply institutionalized and transformed into a key factor of country's economic development. Flexible production, which allows consumers with the help of things to construct their individuality; a developed system of credits; electronic payment resources; communication resources which destroy traditional views about space and time; a branched network of topical institutions, satisfying the needs in communication, traveling without domestic problems and others make a revolution in consumption possible. The latter dictated a new attitude to “human resources” viewing them, first of all, as consumers.

Since consumer society is a complex of relations, where symbolism of material objects prevails making consumers acquire things in order to empower themselves with particular status, the arrangement of trade relations is radically changed. Key positions in the consumer society are held by shopping malls, called “cathedrals of consumption”, because their influence on a buyer is similar to a believer in a church.

Rationalization of an internal organization of shopping malls guarantees effective sales mechanisms, which ease a search of a specific kind of product, promises multi-functionality of time spent in the form of rationally-economic, recreational, communication, integration consumers' practices.

A key factor of impact on a potential buyer is drama of shopping as a game. Shopping game gives satisfaction from imaginable consumption. But the trap is that it is hard to escape the game, because a marketer, as a skilled director, who drives a consumer into the needed direction, imposes on him roles suggesting active purchases. Special attention is given to the package, which has a symbolic cost, underlining the meaning of consumption for formation, support and expression of personal identity and style of life. Consumption becomes an act, which provokes both excitement and doubt: will this product (symbol) make me similar to other members of my group. Process of judgment is based on

mythology which requires subordination, but not thought [2]. Entertainment and symbolism of shopping game turn personality into an object of violence and at the same time a subject of creativity. These two opposing but closely related trends in his behavior are described with the help of “image” and “style of consumption” categories.

Field effect, emerging in shopping malls, possesses a power of attraction in relation to different social layers and groups. For many a consumption becomes objectively unfeasible, but passionately desired, violating the balance between structure of needs and available resources for their satisfaction. Patterns of formation and organization of shopping malls with specific set of attributes form consumers’ standards all over the world. A wide spread of unified values becomes a significant factor of social segregation. Consumption ceases to be a practice of satisfaction of needs, since its property is man's involvement into supra-consumer behavior. Expenditures of consumers on public profligacy turn out to be more important, than expenditures on natural life maintenance. Involved into a consumption circle man wastes money to obtain at its expense a recognition of his status affiliation. Underlining a status with the help of consumption comes not from some vital need, but from pressure of respective type of culture, evaluating luxurious consumption as exclusive and worthwhile.

Thus, consumer society is a natural stage of capitalism development. Consumer revolution causes drastic changes in trade organization, services. Shopping malls shape a relation to the process of consumption as a game, on the one hand, with the help of entertainment space of possibilities, and on the other hand, with the help of symbolism fixing limits of choice. Shopping malls are a universal mechanism of emergence and extension of innovative consumers’ practices. Usage of unified technologies of control of buyers' behavior allows to link the practice of consumption in shopping mall with manifestation of wider social interactions, connected to proliferation of consumers’ settings in different spheres of personal and social life.

References

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