

Social Control and the Illusion of Freedom in Leisure: The Internet Paradigm

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The aim of the present paper is to examine the incorporation of young people in the process of socialization in Greece during the first years of the 21st century. Based on models of leisure that is, non-working and non-educating time, will underline the contrast between leisure and working time. Whereas working time is considered as regulated by mechanisms of social control, leisure is considered, in the context of social representations as well as of the literature of social sciences, as unregulated by such mechanisms. This paper is trying to uncover contemporary structures of surveillance and mechanisms of social control applied on controlled, even 'hegemonized' leisure types of young people.

Keywords: internet, freedom, leisure, illusion, youth, control mechanism.

A Introduction

The present work will try to illustrate structures of monitoring and mechanisms of control in the dominant models of youth's leisure. The concept of leisure will be examined as a privileged social time for the study of modern societies' social problems and particularly of the question of the future of younger generations. In this sense, the concept of leisure should be examined, as G. Pronovost (1993) puts it, not separately from social being but as a contextual field of the hierarchy of social values. In other words leisure is historically, socially and culturally specific as well as influenced by human agency.

B. The disguise of power

The present work, however, is not a formalistic, functional analysis of youth's leisure. It is a sociological analysis, based on research that understands values to be socially adaptable, with explicit social origin and historical definitions, - and not an independent 'reality' with functional usefulness, which records new social structures, - the society of leisure'. My work is critical to this idea. The present text is an effort to record methodologically this criticism based on my working hypothesis.

Nevertheless, being critical of functional analysis does not prevent me from acknowl-

edging the concept/value of leisure as a privileged field of sociological analysis. Someone could ask, "Why leisure is a privileged field of sociological analysis since it is not a new dominant reality"? A concrete answer to this question is based - on the criteria of recognizing a dominant social time as recorded by R. Sue (1994), denying any epistemological or teleological identification - that these criteria from a certain point of view, involve. In this sense, the significance of leisure and thus its privileged rank for a sociological analysis is justified by the following criteria.

Firstly, the quantitative criterion, that is, the amount of time spent by young people in leisure activities. In many cases, the length of other activities such as education (teaching and examinations) and labor is less than the length of leisure activities. Secondly, the economic criterion, as dominant models of leisure involves important productive activities such as show business, Media, tourism industry and private entertainment spaces. Thirdly, the criterion regarding the particular way of constructing and representing reality. This criterion concerns a web of activities such as young individuals' belief that virtual models of Media exist in everyday life, the discovery of new categorizations that lack socioeconomic reference and the eventual rejection of the latter. Young individuals' self-identification relates to the music they hear

(rock fun, hip-hop fun) or the life-style they lead (customer of the x nightclub) rather than being wealthy or poor.

Leisure creates a virtual reality which acts apologetically, in the first place, towards this mode of production. To a second degree however, it appears to become autonomous and acts attractively to the system, alienating consciences, attracting new members to 'happy', that is contented individuals justifying their incorporation as free choice, in a free space of activities, when the rest of society is not free.

Therefore, it becomes obvious that by accepting the concept of leisure as an important sociological research topic, we could keep pace with the efforts to reject the argument for a society of leisure. Hence, escaping from a structuralist analysis my claim is that time, space and society are transformed through human agency and inconsequently by social activities which alter the organization of time that is, their social organization and their representation. The development of social activities however does not comply with a functional analysis of 'good practices' in order to achieve social consent. On the contrary this development is the result of a constant battle between masking (and hence maintaining) and revealing (and hence altering) oppressive structures in each social space that constitute expressions of power. The concept of leisure as a socially readjustable representation is historically and socially defined.

As an integral piece of society, leisure is subjected to the distribution of power and discipline as any other social phenomenon. The social world is characterized by expressions of conflicts for power, most of which stem from material, that is, economic, reasons. Such conflicts result in the dominance of the have's who establish formal and informal institutions of socialization and social control the preservation of which is the key of the reproduction of a social system and hence their continuous predominance at the expense of the dominated. The result, however, of these conflicts often covers up its source of origin. References to 'social stability' dominates symbolism, exorcising efforts of re-

coding social conflicts. Both institutions and public speech, and hence social knowledge are governed by the rhetoric of stability and its products. On the one hand there are the representations of autonomy and freedom of young individuals as far as leisure is concerned and hence the instrumental language legitimation and preservation of status quo and on the other hand the material – real reproduction of the dominated labor and petit bourgeoisie settings as met in the modern capitalist society.

These particular representations, the instrumental language and their consequences in the reproduction – through disguise – of the social inequalities, are also preserved when academic research and hence knowledge remain circumscribed by cause-effect scripts of an ecumenical rationality. That is, when sociology of leisure investigate what lies underneath the surface, such as the increase or the reduction of the time that is spent in leisure activities the spurious categorization between energetic and passive or the politics of 'good practices' which is identified with quality leisure activities. In these cases sociology of leisure obscures the social context of the study and thus it de-socializes a disciplinary field that it could otherwise be proved fruitful. In such a study there is no reference to social use of leisure and its variations. Then it focuses on existing 'free' choices and the conviction that the *invisible hand of the market* will correct misdeeds by putting forward the so-called 'good examples'. In this way a homogenization of the space of application of 'good practices' occurs, which often takes the form of an autonomous and groundless social group. This is, the young generation, the young individuals of our time; a social group without social differentiations evidently in need of protection and guidance as far as leisure activities are concerned.

Nevertheless, homogenized 'good practices' of leisure in the context of a society with a malfunctioning social state and with increasing processes of destabilization are often checked and carried out by private institutions (or disguised private institutions),

which aim at preserving the commoditized character of leisure industry. Even when the public character of 'good practices' is ensured and every possibility of commoditization is excluded, a new form of 'good practices' is adopted; they take the form of or programs of vocational training oriented towards commoditized processes of leisure or programs of cultural improvement. In the first case there is a market feedback and hence reproduction of the commoditization system and in the second case there are policies of disguise of segregations in leisure activities.

The disguise is achieved either by promoting cultural products that express the dominant culture, or with the selective promotion of cultural products that ostensibly 'object' to the dominant culture to be appropriated at a second stage, thus becoming the next generation products of the dominant cultural order of things – in short, a travesty of Hegelian dialectics! Leisure as a whole, as well as the development of particular models of leisure activities, is not controlled by those social groups that lack social power. It is a game that they play under the rules set by others. One that they loose as they cannot come to terms with its rules (either because of ignorance or because of lack of the medium). But even if they gain then not only the result of their action has ceased to express themselves, but the result has a usage value as for the terms of the game, so that it is incorporated immediately as a reform, which does not however changes its character.

As mentioned above, this paper aims to uncover structures of surveillance and social control over the leisure activities of young individuals. Particularly, the following three sub-hypotheses summarize the theoretical background of the main hypothesis by:

1. criticizing the theories of voluntarism and utilitarianism and challenging thus the 'autonomy' of young individuals and the 'freedom' to chose how to spend their leisure. The key-concept of this hypothesis is the social determination of leisure.
2. discussing the conflicts and the structures of oppression and mainly the way that

mechanisms of control operate in dominant structures of leisure activities. The key concepts in this hypothesis are surveillance and discipline.

3. Uncovering the apparent meanings that employ instrumental utterances of leisure and legitimate reality by biding it with metaphysical aspects. Since, the dominance of the concept of stability stems from discourses and social knowledge.

C. Social determination of leisure

According to Durkheim (1933), leisure activities contribute towards balance and relief, constituting in deed remnants of religious behavior. In social situations of *organic solidarity* leisure is differentiated both structurally and functionally so as the objective of social harmony to be always achievable. In this framework, modern formalistic sociology of leisure argues that leisure obeys the functional principle of preservation reflecting and strengthening the conscience of the community and the values, accepting hence the dominant cultural values and the justification of the dominant aims of the system. Such a value is the necessity if social differentiation as an inevitable and always present element of human societies. Pursuit - through the study of leisure – of questions of social differentiation are consequently concerned either with social mobility issues and hence with evaluation and normative reports of 'good practices', or with the discovery of new differentiations (of non-socioeconomic origin) and new peculiarities. The market of leisure is highly competitive and no group is dominant. Therefore, no one can define how the 'average' leisure activities are constructed. Then we find theories that focus on multi-variable factors and on defending alternative leisure of horizontally divided categories such as young individuals, women, homosexuals and so on. Their main argument is that in contemporary multicultural society every sub-culture is accepted.

This argument is related to a disciplinary stance referring to leisure activities and hence the evaluative place and the compatibility that these have in the modern liberal,

open, multicultural society. Leisure activities are free, non-productive and hence non-regulated by the market activities. They have pre-defined rules that become acceptable consciously and after free choice. Therefore, on the one hand any social determination becomes autonomous from the material base of each society and in turn forms autonomous, class-free social categories, which must harmoniously coexist with each other. These categories are articulated and hence conflict, control, and imposition do not have place in their space. On the other hand, autonomous social groups act in a space of noticeable dominance of free choice and self-determination. The individual shares a common human substance which challenges accrete discriminations and past hierarchical segregations.

If so, what about Weber's argument (1968) that leisure is a tool of power, used for the preservation of the existing dominance as a symbolic expression of power using exclusion and the exclusivity in leisure activities?. Even Caillois self-criticizing himself, declared that game is an indulgent activity that presupposes free time. He who is hungry does not engage in recreation (1967).

Non-working time in a capitalist economy corresponds either to the renewal of working force and reproduction, or in consumption and "dead" time. The later in concrete historical-social situations (the timespan between work and the return home in modern metropolis) is very important due to its length¹. In the first case, non-working time is the source of the surplus value of labor force. In the second case, consumption is included in the space of necessity and it cannot be delimited as free time. On the one hand since individual interests of consumption are disguised social interests and on the other hand because consumption obeys the market and hence capitalism, either explicitly or implicitly through fetishism of commodities.

What however need to be analyzed now are the cases for which the above model does not appear to match modern behaviors and activities. According to Baudrillard's effort (1970) to cover this theoretical void in symbolic (and not in material as they do not exist) terms, modern leisure is characterized either by retrospective activities or by the ethics of entertainment. That is, by the ethics of a pressing intensification, an intensive consumption of non-productive time, which results in the production of social place. People will never achieve to lose enough time so as to exorcise the fate that wants them passing their life gaining it. The fetishism of commodities is turned into fetishism of mythical value; an equation that expresses the time and means through which it is organized; leisure. But even this intensive consumption of non-productive time concerns activities that constitute choice of higher social levels which, as Simmel (1991) claimed, through cultural dominance end up being an objective solution for all.

This of course applies to all cultural products, which are mechanically differentiated, perpetuating the false picture of qualitative competition and possibility of choice, while in essence there exists a hierarchical line of products of diverse quality that serves the "law" of absolute quantification. The kingdom of pseudo-individuality is revealed. The individual is a product of the economic and social mechanism of society and the freedom of his choice is freedom of choice of one thing with an endless variety of personae. Freedom of choice will only exist when there is an abstraction of social determinism. In this way as Lanfant (1972) argues, the sociological problem of relations of leisure with its sociological determination is dispensed. Nevertheless, the independence of the subject during his leisure, as we will see bellow, is powerful only in the symbolic field. The subjective representations cannot be acclaimed as objective foundations of reality or using the words of Lanfant (ibid) - "the picture that somebody has for a phenomenon is not the phenomenon itself". This intuitionism has of course its sources, as Bourdieu (1979)

¹ According to a study published by the National Technical University of Athens (EMP), the average length of this timespan in Athens approaches 2 hours (Newspaper To Vima 4-11-2001:44).

mentioned in Kantian aesthetics: “beauty as absolute creation, as mimesis of the divine action of Creation”.

Leisure, in a society of leisure, however, is not pure leisure neither transcendental action – an end in itself. It is an obvious social relation, the aesthetic judgment is a social competence, a hidden but fundamental dimension of class struggles. The later has two aspects: Firstly, monopoly to the access of the production of goods or services of leisure. Secondly, legitimation of the dominant and the marginalization of the rest social practices of leisure. An illustrative survey, in the motherland of the so-called dominant leisure activity of internet in the 21st century – USA – only 25% of children and youngsters of 8-18 years old have internet access (To Vima 5-11-2000). This percentage is higher than its equivalent in other countries of the world. Therefore, internet access is monopolized by 25% of young Americans, less than 25% young Europeans and much less (percentages close to zero) of young individuals in the two most dense continents of the world Asia (except Japan) and Africa.

As Tourain (1992) has noted socio-economic groups tend to differentiate themselves through the degree of participation in the activities of culture and not through possession of different subcultures; a result which perhaps stems from weakening of traditional ties between culture and social groups. Individuals are exposed to mass leisure activities breaking the closed circle of primary institutions of socialization; previously institutions of culture that are now under the pressure of mass culture, express a cultural withdrawal. As a result individuals distance themselves from community-oriented forms of leisure and tend to participate either to mass or home oriented forms of leisure. At the same time, the level of their attendance in these activities is socially determined, mainly by the place that they possess on the ladder of stratification.

Dominated groups are led to a defensive attitude against mass culture as they do not have access to it. Their behavior varies from passive use of dominant cultural means at home

to the cultural withdrawal of marginal groups. In both cases however, even in the case of limited participation, there is cultural isolation of values that come from the center and psychological transcription of subjugation or economic and social dependence. When passivity is connected with the commoditisation, then the proposed solution is refusal of consumption. This solution however is on the one hand unfeasible for the passive petit-bourgeoisie groups and the working class, while on the other hand, for the outcasts, it is spurious, since it confirms their cultural withdrawal, by legitimating the dominant values. This last point is occurring through penalization of activities that do not constitute alternative cultural suggestions.

Contemporary research from leisure theorists confirms the above claim. A collective volume using example from Hungary, Brazil, Puerto Rico and Japan (Roberts, Olszewska 1989) illustrate that groups of people with higher income and professional rank present higher participation levels in leisure activities in relation to lower economic groups. As Roberts claims (*ibid*), since 1970 capitalist economies are characterized by inequality in leisure. Dominant social groups monopolise outdoor leisure activities whereas lower economic groups take up indoor activities, particularly since the increase of penalization of leisure activities as alcohol.

All the above researches can be classified under two characteristics. Firstly, under the claim that theories of free choice are fruitless (Moorhouse 1988). Secondly, under the refusal on the freedom of choice and the claim that labour is not separated from production activities. As Debord mentions (1986:33) it depends on it. It is an endless and full of admiration subordination to the needs and the results of production. It is a product of the rationalism of production.

Leisure as a product controlled by process holds an important characteristic: Exchangeability; a consumptive disguise of production time which is loaded with evaluations as a succession of factitiously individualised moments. It is raw material for various new products imposed in the market as social or-

ganized uses of time. As Debord (1986:118) argues it is known that saving time is a long-standing demand of modern society. Concerning either the speed of means of transportation or the instant soup-bags is translated positively by the population of the United States since watching television is one of his main daily activities consuming 3-6 hours of his daily time.

Returning to the theoretical refusal on the freedom of choice as in Bucharin's *History of historical materialism* (1921) I would claim that the feeling of independence should not be confused with actual independence. By accepting indeterminism, one gives way to superstition, faith in supernatural, half-religious ideas and rejects action considering anticipation and planning. Mainly, however, one rejects the decisive importance of social phenomena, the social result of various social aspirations and finally the social character of knowledge and science. This however cannot happen, in as far as researches focusing on leisure mention regularities, gather conclusions that reveal socially determined phenomena, as that of differentiation in the forms of disposal of time. Freedom is a well-known necessity, wrote Bucharin (1921: 57), clarifying that not even communist society would be a society of leisure but a society with conscious organized character.

The above constitute an answer not only to the contemporary formalistic sociology of leisure but also to social scientists that focus on aspects of game. Caillois (1967) wrote that one of the most important elements that structure a culture of game is destiny and fortune. Is fortune however a dominant characteristic of modern society and a supplement to free choice? This acceptance in the substance provokes theories of social determination and hence social necessity. According to Spinoza (1987) what is named accidental is the lack of deeper knowledge. What we call fortune in reality is our ignorance. In other words a phenomenon is a result of lines of causes that we selectively and non-holistically know. Social phenomena are products of historical necessity, that is, prod-

ucts of social development, which sometimes is desirable and other times is not since we do not have the possibility to affect the entire course of this development. If however we accept that certain phenomena are fortuitous results then we reject social and accept indeterminism and hence we cultivate faith in supernatural or metaphysical. Nonetheless, the reality in the disposal of not weekday time, as it is recorded in many studies is not metaphysical but socially determined. It is product of historical development in direct relation with social parameters.

D. Surveillance in leisure

Social determination reveals socioeconomic differentiations in the disposal of leisure. Different models coexist but both in the symbolic and the material level of relations only one of them dominates. Dominant culture is the result of conflict in the level of material relations and predominance of the haves in distinction of those who possess only their labor force. The dominance of one way of disposal of leisure, or better of one model in the frame of which small differentiations are allowed as long as existing status is not disturbed is the crystallization of cultural dominance of urban-industrial-market culture. Dominance leads, through control, to conformism and homogenization. As Horkheimer and Adorno (1979) mentioned, individuals are compliant subjects to the industry of culture, which catalytically affects us both consciously and unconsciously. Control becomes more intense as leisure becomes commoditized leading in a single-dimensional leisure. The façade of free choice, of focus of the industry of leisure on individual particularities is a mirage since in essence it paralyzes critical thought. Control is embedded in the externalization of pleasure, as Freud (1979) claims. The individual body as well as the natural and social environments are spaces of externalizations but also mechanisms of control. As soon as we realize that leisure is organized socially through a network of finance, political, juridical and cultural forces, we understand that its expression and its way of disposal is can-

onized, legislated and controlled by such a reality. Possibility of juxtaposition exists only in social groups that are capable of changing their terms of existence. It is clear that such groups do not belong to lower social classes, which remain obedient sources of consumption of dominant leisure. The products of the later are usually mechanically differentiated pseudo-individual rather than truly atomised since they are included in a hierarchical line of products that serves the law of absolute quantification. Freedom of choice is freedom of choosing just one thing that is always the same. The only change is the extent of its use which depends on social status of the user.

This process is inherent to industrial culture. It began slightly differently, as demonstrated by Weber (1976) but with the same purpose - control. In early capitalist societies spontaneous joy – leisure was considered a sin and hence reprehensible and punishable. As E. P. Thompson (1994) mentions popular customs, games and the celebration days were assaulted by moralists and enthusiasts of discipline. Calvinist ethics imposed activities that increase the glory of God. Progressively sin, guilt and shame gave their place to rationalism, discipline and control. Leisure impinged on bureaucracy whose main characteristics are hierarchy, specialization, regulations and the formalist un-impersonation. Even when paternalist and irrational behavior dominates leisure, as the talent of an artist, this is bound to be linked to rational creation of an industry, which transforms the personal element in impersonal market (the person or the song is transformed in a t-shirt). Even Huizinga (1949) had remarked that within modern culture we encounter artificial and no genuine games connected with the tendency of angelification and the insatiable thirst of banal amusement. These, however, are not causes but consequences of the way that leisure is organized.

Elias (1986), following Weber, observes that leisure activities are rendered under control, through which every unverifiable, violent and purely sentimental value. This is the result of blossoming and the perpetuation of

democratic regime which demands stability and hence individual self-restraint but also the presence of activities that would be countermeasures in a very effective governmental control of violence. Activities such as sports or night amusement in which search of emotion coexists with control and restriction of overt emotional expressions in the daily life. Nevertheless, Elias' theoretical approach leaves a theoretical void. Who and for what reason imposed gradual control on leisure activities? Democracy's need for stability is a result of a catholic consensus of individual behaviors or dominant ideology that became such through conflict? Is culture the result of consensus processes or is connected, as Gramsci (1971) claimed, with political dominance, power and mainly with the struggle for dominance and the hegemony of bourgeoisie. Leisure activities are as all social phenomena an arena of power relations. Besides, individuals enter in a system of interactions that it is not a system of harmony and order but a system that in order to understand we need to take into account the issue of conflict.

Another issue of crucial significance is that of power, which is determined by the position and the role of the individual in society which in turn are consequences of the material relations of the process of production. The disposal of leisure of an individual is a result of the distribution of power determined by the relations within the process of production in which the individual partakes. In addition leisure is time determined by the relations of production. This means that according to its socioeconomic integration, the individual manages this form of power either with small to non-existent access to dominant means or with passive use of the available dominant products of leisure or with increased possibilities to change the terms of power disposal. In modern societies however, leisure cannot become an event autonomous from material constraints. On the contrary it is a hallucination of individual power practiced towards leisure but simultaneously it is a reality of big power practiced by those who determine the ways of the disposal of leisure.

Power is transformed into control which is a condition necessary in order for passive and mass leisure to be cultivated. Control often turns into self-restraint, since what is initially reported as structures of social control become social practices or according to Bourdieu (1990) *habitus*. Control, as exercised in modern societies as far as leisure activities are concerned has the character of a new social management, which obeys four principles: individualization of personal space, the regulation of activities, routinification of activities and finally their consortium. The concepts of control, discipline, repetition, standardization, anticipation and automation are concepts around which my methodological tools are revolved in order to connect the particular research hypothesis to the conclusions of the research.

Starting from a different methodological base, Rojek (1985) reaches similar patterns that govern the organization of leisure activities in modern capitalistic societies. These are, first, the leisure activities that take place in private space, mainly in a house. Second, the individualization of leisure activities, which is connected with the narcissism of individualized identity and hence alienation. Finally, that leisure activities are commoditized and soothing. The two last points result in the refinement, restriction, regulation, routinification and hobnobbing of leisure activities.

In 1980 Naville wrote that it is not unintentional that private or public enterprises as well as governments reject anything that can establish the institution of self-management in labor while they extensively focus on self-management in the cultural level (games, celebrations, arts, etc) does not harm their prestige and their decisions (1980:24). This occurs because the organization of consumption is intensified, that is, leisure embedded with elements of standardization, control and hierarchy. According to Naville then "the various ways of consumption of leisure often become mechanical, automated, programmed, listed to a certain extent, imposed, annoying.....therefore it would be a mistake to believe that leisure makes us independent

from the system in which we live"(1980:104).

Following Hannah Arent (1970) I claim that coercion can be proved a successful technique of social control and influence when it is widely supported. This is related to discourse that either functions as a legitimating mechanism or remains inactive and hence supporter of the former. This inactivity is explained, at least partially by the extent of social individualification and hence the disappearance of every form of organized resistance. It is interesting to observe how the ratification of dominant commoditized leisure activities of youngsters is achieved. This is a result stemming from the development of a situation in which culture as identification, confirms social differentiations. Nowadays, on-line lifestyle, subjective strategies of integration and homogenized culture constitutes mainstream discourses. The Internet is considered by some a democratizing technological tool since no one controls it. Passive and unilateral relation of controllers and those controlled is transformed into an interaction of equals. Cameras are no longer devices of power but also means of resistance for the citizens (Tziovas 2001). Nonetheless, are we about to enter to an era of true and free leisure or is control obviously strengthened and simultaneously inconspicuous in symbolic and/or dominant discourse?

Firstly, homogenized culture is not a product of a process of democratization and weakening of control. Dependence in a globalized space has been the focus of an entire group of theorists of leisure. In the field of relations between states, starting from the reaction of Latin-American Marxists to the developmental models of Second and Third world economies, dependency theorists argue that in the level of leisure activities imperialism dominates the periphery either symbolically (life-styles, sport events and idols, music) or economically (the domination of countries by multinational leisure companies). This dominance stems from the search for new markets, new sources of raw materials and cheap labor. Olympism and Olympic Games reflect western industrial dominant culture, either by

establishing baseball as one of the Olympic sports or by assigning the Games to China, potentially the largest developing economic power of the world.

What happens though in the use of Internet as leisure? Is network lifestyle the apotheosis of, freedom of will, free choice, democratic-interactive communication without dominance of power? Is online a living multidimensional communication and not a single-dimensional way of thought? Communication seems to be endlessly free. In this sense, anarcho-liberal culture can flourish in the context of Internet communication. A new era of communication is born; a new society is structured through internet coffee-shops. We live in the era of e-shopping, we communicate through mobile phone devices, we play games in our PCs through which we can travel instantly wherever we want (Pappano 2001). And all these in a price that we can easily afford; the absence from social activities and the alienation from other individuals. Is this however, the case? Does Internet represent absolute freedom by paying the price of alienation from an anyway troubled world? Is artificial reality in which young individuals enter through Internet, during their leisure a society of free will, a new society, different from the current one? My claim is that Internet use is free only superficially whereas in fact is a super-fast form of control in the open space that substitutes or supplements old disciplinary operations in a closed space.

My first argument to support this concerns the possibility of access; When the planet's population counts over 6 billion, then the 375 millions users of Internet, 3/4 of which live in USA, Canada and Western Europe, then those who do have access constitute a small minority, an elite of 6,25% much less than the 800 millions who suffer from food deprivation and malnutrition, and the 1,3 billions individuals that live in conditions of extreme poverty. Moreover, as far as the way of use is concerned it is fair to say that when common terms are rendered inactive, then in order to use the Internet services one has to adopt new technological and ordinary terminology

(TCP, HTTP, anti-virus software, etc). But when the access in this pre-requisite of new knowledge comes through pre-existing formal and informal education, then it is clear that this knowledge reproduces and perpetuates existing inequalities and oppositions rather than subjugating dominant ideas and supporting new forms of direct democracy. Even the designers of electronic programs themselves accept that Internet use is socially determined. In his interview the chief editor of the news department of the Greek network gate *in.gr* mentioned that World Wide Web Media are addressed to an elite of citizens. Individuals between 20 - 40 of age, middle - upper class, usually educated and multilingual (To Vima 2000:12). My second argument concerns the form of Internet itself. As Deleuze writes (1990) whereas incarcerations are molded distinct models, controls is a modulation like a self-mutated model that it continuously changes. While in the disciplined societies we have two poles the individual and the mass without no incompatibility between the two, in the societies of control we have a digit as code access that simultaneously can signal the reject in the information.

Following this, Guattari (Deleuze 1990) imagines a city in which everyone can leave from his apartment, his street, his neighborhood with an electronic card that could raise hedges and in the same way the card could be rejected by the system. What would count is not the hedge, but the computer that reveals the place of everyone and would affect in an ecumenical modulation. This mutation of control becomes operational as population increases. It is difficult to incarcerate individuals in a global population of over 6 billion people; in this case it is easier to control them. Substitutes of sentences and electronic collars, permanent specialization, marketing, motives and apprenticeship periods are the voluntary or not integrations of young individuals in the society of control, as Deleuze (*ibid.*) argues. Their leisure is also controlled through its disposal to computers and the use of Internet.

Modern internet derived from the control and

administration network of American Pentagon's research division – ARPA- whose work was the promotion, through funding, of researches in universities and private enterprises, on technologies that had military use. Internet's operational mechanism, although simple, is unknown for most of its users. The basic model of communication between computers is called TCP / IP (Transmission Control Protocol / Internet Protocol). As mentioned in a very informative article by software engineer N. Fotis (2000: 3-6) the adhesive substance of Internet is constituted by specialized computers (routers), which undertake the transaction of all data that pass through their connections, that is, their laying in parcels. The decisions on what goes in which parcel are regulated by a regulation table according to which the priority is determined. The use of routers is absolutely necessary to Internet because thanks to them data can find the right destination. In addition to the role of the routers the simple communication of two computers is not as complicated as it appears to be. As mentioned in the same article the later is like a communication between two blocks of flats. Each of them addresses information to the group of bureaucrats of the other building and sends documents for transaction to the "lower floors". Each floor communicates only with the ones above and under it while it is addressed to the corresponding floor of the "opposite" computer.

Pre-requisite to the communication with the router however, and to the communication with the "opposite" computer is the existence of a user - computer that transfers the main protocol TCP / IP and a unique TCP/IP address. Of course there also exist provisional Internet Suppliers that provide a provisional TCP of / IP address and hence provisional connection to Internet as well as subscriber's connection and connections which are obtainable with the term that the user accepts all advertising information sent by the provider. Provided that all the above conditions are met, the provider offers email, newsgroups, teams of discussion as specialized forums with thousands of thematic facilities, a

strict label of "good behavior" that should not be broken and finally the World Wide Web - the network – the global web. This in turn, is based on another protocol; the http and the philosophy hypertext to which *servers* as a different kind of routers have the possibility to serve data. Such servers have the possibility to offer information selected exclusively by them. The philosophy of such Internet sponsors as PointCast, is that the people are tired of searching in the World Wide Web chaos and want operational and locating-friendly computers; computers as operational as televisions are with certain channels which they can watch (Tombras 2000).

The above technical characteristics of Internet structure match with the characteristics of Deleuze's society of control. Modulation as a continuous self-mutated module, access via a unique number, intermediary routers that function according to the principles of marketing, shape the new "race" of our masters, our voluntary entry in the world of monitored access, controlled operation and information. The above, however, are not the only characteristics of a society of control. Bentham's Panoptical so detailed described by Foucault (1977) was based on the principle of constant surveillance of all inmates while they could not see their warders. Now Internet users are like isolated residents of cells that are somehow connected in order for the prisoners to observe their supervisors. In the world bazaar of simultaneous communication of everybody with everybody, supervisors became like the bound on the table insect that everyone can see (Papadakis 2000). The entirety of users, as it is alienated from natural contact, constitutes an artificial community. A community of individuals who do not share determining characteristics of the society. On the contrary, in artificial communities a group is created around a social void whose prefabricated nature does not need cohesion. Therefore, the effect of Internet use to young individuals is not only social isolation but also social distance and mechanic and prefabricated grouping around isolate characteristics launched by servers and undertaken by

routers. The society of control par excellence.

E. Leisure discourses

If however the above provide clues of leisure as socially determined, framed by structures of control why is it that its main conceptual symbols revolve around freedom of choice, respect, stability and uncontrolled functionality? Why discourse and social knowledge are oriented towards theoretical models that do not have counterparts? Most importantly, why does the big gap between reality and phenomenology, as far as leisure activities of young individuals is concerned, favors phenomenology? In an attempt to answer to these questions I will try to decode meanings and social knowledge as appears in recorded and/or measurable discourse. This effort concerns the deconstruction of social representation, the illustration of false discourse in leisure derived from dominant censors, and finally the theoretical suggestion of the way dominant and misleading functions and of the influence that has on social attitudes and perceptions.

Veblen (1899) argues that the main objective of a society is the preparation of youth for the consumption of goods, according to a conventionally acceptable prospect and method. This is achieved either through education's symbolic and ritual characteristics, or through leisure activities in which the young individual is possessed by the faith to chance. Athletes and lucky games enthusiasts, obey in a doctrine through the probability of the presence of bad or good luck. In other words these young individuals as in the case of young persons who belong to pseudo military organizations (eg boy scouts) instinctively sense an unsolved teleological propensity to objects or situations. In this way, however, they are not only addressed to consumption of goods according to the dominant rules, but they also maintain a habitual recognition of superiority, supporting in turn current senses of dominance and loyalty. Young athletes who participate in "good practices" of disposal of their leisure, believe in the equality of their opponents (they all have the right and

the chance to win), support faith and hence obedience and the acceptance of control with virtuous intentions ("energetic leisure is good for me"). In this way, however, they perpetuate thoughts that encourage a system of discriminations imposed by the concept of extra-natural, unsolved propensity to material possessions (Veblen 1899).

Caillois (1967) also argues that when alea (luck) imposes its style on society obedience in it results in apathy. This is the case for coin appliance games which according to the French philosopher, represent emptiness, kill time, reinforce the tendency to passivity and resignation, freeze and disconcert imagination, focus attention on monotony that seduces and sends individuals to sleep. Leisure related to the possession of goods and to irrational instant reaction, because young individualized users, are dependents of leisure as they possess less knowledge or dependent knowledge. In other words as Noutsos (1988:82) states, guidance of personal life is imposed by institutions of the state. So, on the one hand there is difficulty in finding our own way and on the other hand there is the pressing need to follow a guide since absolute incarceration hides many dangers.

Characteristic examples of this practice are the suggestions given by Media regarding restaurants, bars, theatres, cinemas and of course the internet. These suggestions (indirect advertisements) can be found in special insets or even separate guides of recreation (Athnorama, Time Out), which are very popular mainly amongst residents of the two big cities of Greece, Athens and Thessaloniki. Discourse used to convince their readers are indeed interesting to mention. In an article regarding entertainment in the Internet, published in a big national newspaper it was mentioned the following: "Sometimes I used to surf myself but at the time it was funny indeed because there did not exist so many sites and the only way to discover the good ones was to attack in blind with your mouse. Today in order to find good pages you must go deep in dark and unknown corners - who has time for this? I play safe. I have about 10 sites that I visit daily, plus one or two that

pull me out of schedule. I stick to them. Most of them contain external links but my rule is to surf only in the recommended ones” (To Vima, 31/10/1999). Such sites classified in categories are mentioned in the same inset. The categories which a young individual should visit are the following: chat and flirt, money, vehicles, computers, games, astrology, celebrities, music, e-shopping, domestic design, food and drink, fashion and beauty. Faith in the unknown, teleology and the need for leisure guides, coexist with a third element which results in the production of controlled knowledge. Juvenile public instead of trying to acquire knowledge over leisure it tries to acquire prestige, using leisure as a commoditized product. In this case as Adorno and Horkheimer (1979) put it they become part of the ideology of the recreation industry. They cannot escape from the principle of practicality. Homogenisation excludes anything new with the consequence of turning to technique. In such case however, recreation means apathy, escape from resistance and therefore juveniles engage in safe, in terms of ‘control’, entertainment. Consecutively, young individuals justify their ‘choices’, initially through the impression that they have conquered an imagined equality with their co-entertainees, in turn through the belief that their priority in a hostile world hostile is mental self-improvement, while at the same time society must become autonomous from statism and scheduled prosperity and to be led to communication experiences of networking with an aesthetic character. When management of labor tends to eliminate the human factor, then only the growth of individualistic - hedonistic values and the ethics of amusement can be human. Leisure becomes an imagined ‘free’ time that includes neither guidance nor mirages of reality, but fields of action, freely invested by their protagonists. The basic principle is that any activity can constitute a base for leisure. Its characteristics are opposite to those of labour; minimum set of obligations, a psychological sense of freedom, a variety that starts from insignificance and reaches up to significance and importance. Hedonism, however,

is the main axis of organisation of the social relations developed in leisure. It is however, a hedonism that does not only belong to pioneers but is diffused in society, while in the ostensible field it tolerates and incorporates the social diversity, perpetuating a feeling of freedom.

All these symbols are actually recognized and fictionalized today either as collective nostalgia and desire (for example exercising and Olympic Games), or as narcissism (I drink because I like drinking). When the process of labor becomes the central factor through which narcissism is reconciled with the surrounding world, then in the non-labor time the ‘free’ time, the separation between identity and wish is not achieved. These cases are suitable moments for the establishment of totalitarian relations, which characterize the society of leisure, twisting reality (structures of control) by providing false social knowledge. The relations that frame the social practices of leisure, twist in eternity as they incorporate in individuals and become a second nature, a *habitus*, are reproduced, and transmitted through socialization and game to juvenile members of society.

As Bourdieu noted in “Distinction”(1979) dominated groups tend to deny that they have been deprived, content with what has been granted to them, regulating their expectations in modesty, defining themselves as upper-middle class defines them. This, at the same time, means that they uncritically accept existing delimitations of general and vague significances of aggressiveness and deviance, defining this way implicitly the limits of a conventional and acceptable leisure activity. Besides, deviance is a behavior that falls outside the expected, desirable model, as it is defined by dominant groups (Varma 1990). This definition is expressed and theorized through discourses of the dominant order erasing in this way its origins and converting it into common ‘knowledge’. The metaphysical significance of criminal behavior and the real probability of penalization function as additional mechanisms of monitoring of the discourse on leisure mainly through the fear of victimization and also through the prestige

of the expert.

In this framework it is interesting to examine the spurious conflict between conservatives and liberals about the issue of control on the content of video games and internet sites that contain evident sexual or violent character. Their debate revolves around to “whether and if so, to what extent violent and sexual content influences psychologically children younger than 13 years old. Conservatives claim that there exists a cause-effect cross-correlation between content and behavior of children when through virtual reality this particular deviating behavior becomes acceptable, legitimated and prize-worthy (The more people you kill the more bonus you get). Their proposal suggests penalization of such behavior and central control on the production of systems of virtual reality, according to certain principles. In the antipode, the liberals invoke sociological studies that claim that virtual reality does not create violent behavior. On the contrary, violent tendency is inherent in human beings and in this sense it is better to express itself in a controlled environment such as the one of the video games rather than in real life. Liberals do not support penalization although they do not deny the delimitation of deviation in the disposal of leisure. As a result, they propose no central control but enterprises’ self control that distributes electronic leisure to juveniles in respect to the avoidance harmful behaviors.

In both cases, the epicenter, the forms and the limits of deviation are defined by the two opposite groups. Therefore, the debate is misleadingly and arbitrary since the criteria are located in certain categorizations and certain behaviors (eg violence and sex), which are legitimated in social practice (bars, cinemas, Mass Media). A result of this “conflict” is the creation from above of an institution of evaluation of appropriateness of such games since the beginning of ‘90s in USA (ESRB), and in EU (ELPSA). These two institutions classify Games of Virtual Reality according to the extent of violence and sex they contain and create symbols of appropriateness for each age (Eleytherotypia 17-08-1999).

Fear of crime and terror of repression result

in apologetic and legitimating knowledge. At the same time, however, with more, exist discourses of hedonism and individualism, as well as the faith in the good practices with virtuous intentions. All these twist the reality of existence of structures of control. An investigation of the dominant meanings could illustrate that structures of power and control limit and twist internal human capabilities and needs. This, according to Chomsky (1984), can happen when people realize that the innate structures of human brain can be very rich in terms of comprehension and can constitute the base for human action and thought. When spurious neutrality and objectivity of the institutions of leisure is revealed (intellectuals, Mass Media) and the standardized character of leisure activities is underlined, through symbols, ideas and significances which in turn are transformed in symbols and ideotypes of practice towards which daily practice is oriented. When this triumph of meaningless and contradictory in the cultural pages of newspapers is revealed, where chaos is presented as research, matter of taste, enjoyment and the formalist sociologists of leisure compromise with the void or excessiveness. Even when something cultural - non conventional can occur in a homogenized society before the later penalizes it, it nevertheless has great possibilities in incorporating and constituting an apologetic avant-garde of styles and technique but not of content. Initially it causes hysteria in the press, hysteria which is in between fear and attraction. Then stylistic innovations are discovered as well as antisocial actions, which through discourse give birth to moral panic. In the first case, the stylistic discovery results in commoditization of the symbols of anti-culture. In the second case difference will be transformed from dangerous either to something exotic and meaningless or it will be controlled and re-defined and declassified (it is not that bad) (Hebdige 1987). In any case however, the dominant conventional discourse is a spectacle, a body of unification with tautological character and an enormous intractable and inaccessible positivity which according to Debord (1971) requires

passive acceptance by definition.

Our age prefers image than object, the copy than the original, representation than reality, the phenomenon than being. However, knowledge as ideology is a false conscience of reality, which is used in order to legalise perceptions for leisure completely wrong as is the concept of ecumenical, harmonious, or even escape from reality. To remind Debord (1971) again, the alienation of the spectator from the object that observes is expressed as follows: the more he observes the less he lives, the more he accepts to recognize himself through dominant images of need the less he comprehends his own existence and desire.

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