

## The Commodities in Post Capitalist Society: Domination of the Invention of Technology in Society Activities

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### Abstract

The aim of this article is to describe the domination of the invention of technology in society activities in the form of commodities in post capitalist society. The products produced by the capitalist corporations have made the society very consumptive; they have become highly dependent on communication technology products such as gadgets, mobile phones, and computers. Changes in conventional business transactions into electronic transactions, media activities that have made the community as a spectacle for others, as well as changes in worker quality from skill worker to knowledge worker. Nevertheless, it is important to observe why people become dependent on these kinds of commodities. What kind of commodities will provide to the society in post capitalist era and how it is provide? This article is devoted to answer these questions.

**Keywords:** Commodity; Post capitalist; Post capitalist society; Consumerism; E-commerce; knowledge worker; Communication information technology.



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### 1. Introduction

In the daily life, people always use something to keep the sustainable of their life, which are called as commodities. The commodities can be as food, clothes, houses, cars, accessories, household appliances, music concerts, programs of television, movie, etc. In the ancient era, the commodities were processed in traditional way with the small numbers of production, because mostly they were used only for personal use or became as barter product with other commodities of the same type or the same values. In modern era, the processes of commodities production were changing into machineries process and with big numbers of productions.

According to Karl Marx's in his critique of political economy, a commodity is an object or good or service ("product" of "activity") (Marx, 2010), which produced by human labour (Marx, 1996). Further, according to Marx, commodities are objects that satisfy human needs and wants. Commodities are the fundamental units of capitalism, a form of economy based on intense accumulation of such subjects. Further, in Marx theory, a commodity is something that is bought and sold, or commodity is a product of labour in which use-value is combined with exchange-value. If it had no use-value, it would have no exchange-value. No one to buy it if it were useless. On the other hand, since it has been produced in order to be sold, its use-value is realizable only through its exchange-value... (Thomson, 1973).

### 2. Methods

The method of analysis of this article is descriptive that describes the observation of the phenomenon situation in society towards the post-capitalist era. Dialectical negotiation of the development of information communications technology that causes changes in commodities forms and dominates society. In addition, observations of why negation and negation matters are also made on dialectical contradictions between capitalist and enterprise workers, which is to indicate the destruction of the existence of skilled workers due to the development of information communications technology that continue developed by the capitalist corporations.

### 3. Results and Discussions

Peter F. Drucker wrote in the introduction of his book that every few hundred years in Western history there occurs a sharp "transformation". Further, he wrote that within a few short decades, society rearrange itself – its world view; its basic values; its social and political structure, its arts; its key institutions, and fifty years later there is a new world. We are currently living in such a transformation, which is creating the Post-capitalist society (Drucker, 1993). Post-capitalism is a new economic system that will replace the capitalist economic system. The change in shape was due to a development in the technological findings that changed some of the existing systems to be newer, faster, and more efficient. This will affect changes in the social form of society. Meanwhile, on the other hand, some classical Marxists and some theories of social evolution, argue that post-capitalist society may emerge as the result of spontaneous evolution to replace the position of capitalism that is considered not up to date anymore. Some argue

to replace the system of capitalism deliberately, especially socialism and anarchism. The group assumes that capitalism will continue to exploit workers in a new form.

The acceleration of changes in the system of production and distribution of products and services occurred after the industrial era of the revolution. Business transactions change due to the development of technological invention. The production process becomes faster, using modern technology machines and with large quantities of production. The forms of communication tools as a means of information transfer also continue to change. The technology plays a role in the changing of society. As [Marcuse \(1968\)](#) states that, the capabilities (intellectual and material) of contemporary society are immeasurably greater than ever before – which means that the scope of society's domination over the individual is immeasurably greater than ever before. Our society distinguishes itself by conquering the centrifugal social forces with technology rather than terror, on the dual basis on an overwhelming efficiency and an increasing standard of living ([May and Powell, 2008](#)).

### 3.1. Consumerism Life Style

The development of communication technology in the form of gadgets, mobile phones or computer devices, has turned into the community's primary needs. The lifestyles of society that are the object of capitalist corporations have changed and become dependent on technological devices. Instant and practical lifestyle has been offered as a part of technology commodity. Business competition among producers provides benefits for people to be able to enjoy technology products at affordable prices, even products that provide high value imaging for consumers, must be purchased at very expensive prices. Overall, the wider community can already enjoy internet-based technology tools. This is one reason the acceleration of technologization in society.

Unconsciously, actually from time to time, the products or services produced by the capitalist corporations have become an inseparable social commodity in society. The commodity has tied all components of society to continue using it in their daily lives ([Debord, 1992](#)). notions that the spectacle is the stage at which the commodity has succeeded in totally colonizing social life. Commodification is not only visible, we no longer see anything else; the world we see is the world of commodity. Modern economic production extends its dictatorship both extensively and intensively...The society's entire sold labour has become a total commodity [Eden, 2012: 109]. Marcus develops a blazing critique of the repressiveness of modern technocratic consumer capitalism in two of his most famous works, *One-Dimensional Man* and *Eros and Civilization*. "The so-called consumer society and the politics of corporate capitalism have created a second nature of man which ties him libidinally and aggressively to the commodity form. The need for possessing, consuming, handling and constantly renewing the gadgets, devices, instruments, engines, offered to and imposed upon the people, for using these wares even at the danger of one's own destruction, has become a "biological need". The luxurious lifestyle provided by the capitalist corporations as part of the service to the consumer has made people spoiled and have no concern for the environment and other human beings.

The developments of technology communication, especially in industry of mobile gadget industry and digital communication industry, give the impact in the changing of society life styles. Traffic of information between members of societies becomes faster and crowded. Traditional transactions that operate in physic market are changing to electronic commerce (e-commerce) transactions. Some parts of supply chain distributions are deleted, due to e-commerce transaction. Only some corporations that using the technology internet telecommunications can play an important roles in e-commerce transaction. E-commerce is business transaction, which connect buyers and sellers in online market.

Refer to the new control in society, Herbert Marcus (1964) coins that by virtue of the way it has organized its technological base, contemporary industrial society tends to be totalitarian. For "totalitarian" is not only a terroristic political coordination of society but also a non-terroristic economic-technical coordination, which operates through the manipulation of needs by vested interests ([Appelrouth and Edles, 2011](#)).

### 3.2. E-payment Transactions

As Richard Douthwaite says, the last big-name economist concerned about what form money should take were Keynes, Fisher, and Simons in the 1930s ([Feeny et al., 2002](#)). Only the most futuristic enthusiasts believe that electronic money will drive out what remains of cash altogether. But the technology does open up the possibilities of what else could be achieved, by bringing together the different kinds of currency that are out there in what is rapidly becoming a multi-currency world [Ibid: 6]. Actually, it had been predicted by some economists and philosopher that the form of money will change in the future. The technology become as a tool to make the new form of money, which is now we are using the e-payment in business or daily activities of our society.

E-payment is an electronic payment system from one bank account, which is using to pay the purchasing transaction of goods and services through electronic, without using cheque, giro, or cash money. The e-payment transactions can do in three ways by using cards, mobile phone, and internet. In the transition from capitalist society to post-capitalist society, the payment and transfer transactions have been switched gradually from conventional system transaction toward electronic transaction system. E-payment has taken over the role of human as a worker in the banking industry. The positions of workers who do the work manually switch to a computerized system with accelerated performance and time and cost efficiency. Some businesses are using computerized system to serve their clients/customers. The implementations of automatic teller machine (ATM) in banking industry are increasing. These machines replace human workers. The banking transactions are more effectively and efficiently through mobile banking. Clients do not have to bring their money in cash or standing in line to do their transaction in the bank. All transaction can be done through their mobile phones, whether in their offices, homes, cafes or any other

places, as long as they have internet connections. The physical currency will increasingly reduce to use due to the existence of mobile banking.

In some European countries, the payment transactions have been using by small chips, which is implemented in people's hand. These people just give their hand to be scanned and do payment transaction. Technology development brings some changes in business culture. Paper money are changing become "cloud money", the paperless money (Feeny *et al.*, 2002). writes that many of the currencies will be the result of accounting for assets differently, and giving the new totals buying power and this combination of multiple currencies dematerialized assets and communications technology may mean any or all of the following – most of which exist already in some form of other – taking shape as part of mainstream life:

- Using virtual currencies as store of value based on pollution permits, which are in turn created by
- international agreements like carbon debt negotiations.
- Issuing pre-payment cards that can be denominated in a range of different units, including public transport trips, phone units, but also other commodities such as water energy or food. These would not be subject to inflation.
- Using virtual currencies as collateral for hard currency loans by developing ways of getting them underwritten by third party – either by regional government in the case of time dollars in the USA, or by insurance companies in the case of trade dollars.
- Providing alternatives to prison, fines and community service by converting debt into electronic money based on time, which must be paid off by helping out locally or doing training.
- Setting up local electronic currencies that allow people to buy excess capacity in the economy in return for the time they spend volunteering.
- Helping develop new supermarket and town centre loyalty schemes based on smart cards, and using them to provide backing for volunteer currencies such as time banks.
- Enabling brokers such as Comic Relief to turn corporate donations in time or loyalty points into goods or cash.
- Setting up new kinds of money systems, such as training pounds, which organizations use to boost the amount of training happening locally.
- Helping large organizations develop "intellectual currencies" that encourage employees to share their knowledge or pass on their training.

Giddens and Cifuentes (2000) notes that in addition to the powerful influences of the global market place and new communications technology, there is groundswell of "globalization from below"; involving may million of people as well as organized groups of all kinds. An infrastructure of global civil society is being built by these changes. It can be indexed by the growing number of non-governmental organizations. In 1950 there were only two or three hundred. Now there are more than 10,000 and the trend is still sharply upwards. Every system has their advantages and disadvantages. Refer to e-payment system, some of the advantages are: faster and convenience, more safety, less operation cost, fix amount to pay for purchasing products or services, simple system, and mobile transaction (can do anywhere as long as have internet access). On the other side, the disadvantages are: need more security efforts because to avoid e-crimes (hacking or fraudsters), reduce the role of human workers, need more cost for technology maintenances, need technology devices and internet access, easy to be accessed by authorities board agency (intelligent police, anti corruption agency).

### 3.3. Media as Global Market for Commodities

The industries that very close with society are media industry. Media is a part of culture industry. They create market for news, information, and entertainments. Douglas Kellner notions that media culture is also that stage on which social conflicts unfold and social reality is constructed, so that the ways in which the dynamic of gender, race, class, nation, and dominant values are played out is crucial for the construction of individuals and society in contemporary culture (Kellner, 2003). The media has become a spectacle commodity that not only produces information in the form of news or entertainment, but also has made the audience as an actor in the spectacle. For example, in some social media, people are unwittingly addicted to posting their activities every day. They have become a spectacle for others.

Debord (1992) notions that the spectacle is not a collection of images; rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by image. Further, he wrote that innovation is present in the process of the production of things. This is not true of consumption, which is never anything but more of the same. Because dead labor continues to dominate living labor, in spectacular time the past continues to dominate the present.

#### a. Knowledge worker

Toward the post-capitalist society, knowledge workers will play an important role in business activities. In the 1700s and early 1800s, as the population of Europeans in North America grew, so too did the actual tiny number of knowledge worker (Cortada, 1998). Those knowledge workers were newspapers editors, writers, ministers, teachers, and lawyers increased [Ibid].

As notion by Peter Drucker that the basic economic resource – 'the means of production' to use the economist's term – is no longer capital, nor natural resources (the economist's land), nor 'labour'. It is will be knowledge. Further, he says that value is now created by "productivity" and "innovation," both applications of knowledge to work (Drucker, 1993). In the post capitalist society, workers are known as "knowledge workers". They are workers whose main capital is "knowledge". Example include software engineers, physicians, pharmacist, architects,

engineers, scientist, design thinkers, public accountants, lawyers, and academics, and any other white-collar workers, whose line of work requires the one to “think for a living” (Davenport, 2005). The common vision of a knowledge worker is that of a person dealing in data and ideas (Cortada, 1998). Knowledge workers are people who can use technology tools, utilize information obtained from data sources on information technology tools for knowledge development, process data to support their work, and develop creative thinking. There are also some of those who work in factories, but they are workers who are operators of high-tech production machines and have knowledge of technology based on the training they have ever gained. They are tech-related workers in performing their work.

People who work in the field of advertising, is one group of workers who have high creativity and part within the knowledge group. Their ability to process ideas is a force in competing with their competitors to get clients. In making an advertisement, whether in the form of audio, print, or visual material (video/short film), they are able to create the word game as "tag line", in order to gain awareness from the public. The power of word processing is the primary key for advertising companies to increase the sales of products / service companies that become their clients. Workers in advertising companies, is one of the dominant groups of knowledge workers to form a new culture in society through business activities.

Programmers are also knowledge workers who have special skills that are difficult to replace by other workers. Their expertise in making "coding" for software programs cannot easily be mastered by others. Many of them are having problems with companies; do not want to share information about the system or "coding" the programs they use in their work. This makes the company occasionally take the decision to build a new system, rather than continuing the work of creating/developing the system using the old system that is locked or takes a long time to complete the system development work. There are three convenient ways to look at the history of knowledge and knowledge workers. First, information and knowledge have a history of their own, with long-standing pattern of behavior, use, and convenience for humans that are of practical concern in business, government, and in our private lives. Second, there is the history of the knowledge workers, that is to say, of people in many walks of life whose primary professional function is gathering and using information of knowledge. Third, knowledge management and knowledge workers as a subject have its own history, although a much shorter one than the first two. These three sets of historical experiences teach us much about the nature of knowledge. These findings increasingly are becoming important as we continue to evolve into an economy in which knowledge drives development and distribution of products and services, and in which growing numbers of workers make their living in the creation and exploitation of information and knowledge for profit [Ibid: 4].

Parker *et al.* (1995) distinguishes five forms of knowledge. According to him, all organizations have knowledge workers but he suggests that the shift-taking place is from embodied and embedded to embrained, encultured and encoded knowledge. Those types of knowledge are Williams (2007)

1. Embrained knowledge – the abstract, conceptual, and theoretical information that we have in our heads. It can be applied to solve problems and think about
2. issues in creative ways;
3. Embodied knowledge – practical and applied ways of doing things learned from experience;
4. Encultured knowledge – shared understanding about how things are done around here;
5. Embedded knowledge – systematic routines that mean a person can perform a task or activity without thinking; the task becomes second nature to the person to an extent that knowledge, learning and skill behind it is submerged; and
6. Encoded knowledge – information conveyed by sign and symbols.

Acceleration of the global nature of information communication has changed the structure of society in some developing countries become part of the global society based on information and knowledge. The development of infrastructure of communications technology that based on internet, which is a huge profit-making business for capitalist corporations, continues to be developed. This change became one of the means to accelerate the transition of capitalist society toward the post-capitalist society. This change is followed by changes in the need for workers in some business areas (Giddens and Cifuentes, 2000) writes that there has undoubtedly taken place a major expansion of global interdependence in the division of labor since the Second World War. This help to bring about shifts in the worldwide distribution of production, including the deindustrialization of some regions in the develop countries and the emergence of the Newly Industrializing Countries in the Third World).

The existence of trade unions does not fully represent the interests of its members. Some trade union officials have links with political parties. They want to be union officials for gathering votes for their political parties. Trade union members are used for political purposes. Most workers who are members of unions are workers who work as factory workers. Whereas knowledge workers, more likely to enter into members of the association of a particular field of work. For example, associations of civil engineers, advocate associations, physician associations, etc. Some of the reasons

underlying this include their minimum educational background, their expertise in a particular field to be gained through special advanced education processes, the location where they work rather than the factory and not related to the means of production.

In the last three decades, corporation or multinational companies prefer to cooperate with outsourcing to supply the worker to them, rather than directly cooperate with the workers. Moreover, it happens to the "blue collar" workers. The main reason is that corporations do not want to accept workers as permanent employees. They do not want to bear the retirement fee for workers, the obligation to pay severance in case of problems in the employment relationship with the workers. Therefore, corporations use outsourcing companies as partners that mediate between corporations and workers. This condition is widely opposed in some countries, especially in developing countries

such as Indonesia. For knowledge workers, they are people who have special skills and they are recruited without going through an outsourcing company.

#### 4. Summary

In line with Drucker's thinking, referring to the history of the development of society, the structure of society in a certain period will always change in accordance with the development of science and technology that affect the production and distribution of products and services in a society. Post-industrialism, therefore, was seen to be composed of a number of unidirectional trends: from manufacturing to services; from blue collar to white collar; from machine to information technology; from industrialist to technocrats; and from large-scale firms to more flexible organizational structures. A key aspect was the rapidly increasing importance of the accumulation, processing and transmission of codified knowledge. Thus, commentators came to talk of post-industrial society as the "information society" (Webster, 1955) the informational city and the "information age" (Castel *et al.*, 1989) (Williams, 2007)

Society will be closely linked to the consumerism lifestyles that consume the products, which are based on communication information technology.

Electronic payment (e-payment) transaction will dominantly play an important role in line with the increasing of electronic commerce (e-commerce).

The capitalist's corporations have kept their consumers alienated from their families, their friends and even their environment and the natural surroundings. They are already tied to mobile communication devices and have become the subjects and objects of the spectacle stage in various social media in mobile devices. The whole society, from adults, teenagers, children, and even babies has become part of the spectacles of these kind Medias, which are available in communication information technology.

It is undeniable that in recent years, some companies have eliminated the existence of the role of human labor and replaced it with robots or computer systems, which replaced the function and role of humans in their business. Especially work related to laborers in factories, shopkeepers, restaurant servants, cashiers, even the function of teller employees in banks. The number of skilled workers will be reduced, but the knowledge workers will stay in business activities.

#### 5. Conclusions

These facts give rise to the important conclusions that in the post capitalist society, the products and services that are produced by the capitalist corporations have become sophisticated commodities due to the development of technology inventions. The society will depend on those products and services. Business transactions have changed from conventional system toward electronic commerce (e-commerce), and it Kellner (2003). Media spectacle. Routledge. followed by the changing of payment system, which called as electronic payment (e-payment) system. Printing money as currency in trading gradually has changed become paperless money. Type of workers also changing from skill workers toward knowledge workers and this means that the existence of the "blue collar worker" will slowly disappear.

The capitalist corporations will increasingly dominate people's life globally, through the products and services they produce in the new form. In addition, the society will be transformed into an information technology society – "InfoTech society". The

shape of commodities in post capitalist society will be produced based on the productivities, innovations, and creativities of knowledge workers. Moreover, commodities of capitalist will still exist as fundamental need of the societies all over the world.

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