"Security Under Uncertainty – Exploring Emancipatory Alternatives to Modernity's Protectionist Trap"

Abstract

Uncertainty became a key feature of modern life, whereas security through protection became the mechanism for managing said uncertainty. But is the time we live of unprecedented uncertainty? Or more secure than ever before? Being we, the ones confused and obsessed with seeing security in certainty or finding certainties in security? The end of the Cold War signalled a fundamental change in the logic that underlies security "from the management of insecurity to the management of uncertainties" (Kessler & Daase, 2008, p. 14). Hence, what then are we expecting to bring to the discussion? The research aims to bring clarity to the fact that uncertainty did not increase. What increased was our expectation for certainty and control on security. Understanding Man's capacity to live in security under uncertainty, without falling into the trap of protection, is the main purpose.

The research highlights the understanding of uncertainty as an existential and unresolvable condition (Booth & Wheeler, 2008). Nevertheless, with which modern Man continuously struggles. In the permanent obsession and endeavours to resolve uncertainty with protection in the face of what the future might bring, modern Man misses the possibilities of enjoying security. This stems from the fact that we are now more obsessed with protecting against uncertainty while, at the same time, more "likely to be overwhelmed by the disasters that loom ahead" (Furedi, 2006).

For this reason, the research resorts to immanent critique as a method of empirical analysis to identify the contradictions of security. The purpose of using immanent critique is to "detecting the societal contradictions which offer the most determinant possibilities for social change" (Antonio, 1981, p. 330). The method is expected to highlight that, despite laying on the premise that protection contributes to increasing security, in concrete terms, its implications may show us that protection contributes to spreading the feeling of permanent insecurity (fear) while also reinforcing structural vulnerabilities revealing certain unpreparedness for life changes.

Key Words

Uncertainty/Impermanence, Security, Protection, Emancipation, Inter-Being/Interdependency

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https://doi.org/10.1177/030437540803300206