

Andreas Herteux

Homo stimulus

Fundamentals of Human Adaptation and
Development in the Age of Collective Individualism

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**Fundamentals of Human Adaptation
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Content

Introduction	7
The Homo stimulus	13
The Development of the Modern Stimulus Society	30
Interview with Andreas Herteux	65
Digression: What is Behavioral Capitalism?	72
Digression: The Age of Collective Individualism	92
Prospects for the future.....	103

Introduction

The world is changing at a rapid pace and we are facing a new period in human history. Whether in the social, political, economic or technological field, the upheavals will be so enormous that the retrospective will probably speak of the beginning of a new age. One of Collective Individualism. Although the changes can already be guessed or even recognized today in a beginning or partly advanced stage, it is not necessary to follow this summarizing basic idea. It is not necessary for this monograph, but it would be useful to place the present in a corresponding context, because with all changes, whether they are to be considered as singular events or discussed in an interdependent way, questions arise that need to be answered:

- How do these upheavals affect people?
- How has it adapted to the changed conditions?
- Did conditioning take place and if so, by what means?
- What would be the consequences of this conditioning?

- What does this mean for the future and what developments can be expected?

It is therefore about the individual, who in a time of eroding milieus, modern Stimulus Society or Behavioral Capitalism, to name but a few catchwords, has become more than ever the focus of attention than at any other time in history. What has now become of this man, on whom manifold forces and stimuli of a completely new kind have an effect? Or has he remained a constant in stormy times?

The theory of Homo stimulus tries to answer these and other questions or at least to give an impulse to dare to look into the present and future from the point of view of the individual, because up to now there seems to be a lack of satisfying theses. And with this, one question is answered in advance: Yes, the theory to be presented assumes an adaptation or further development of Homo sapiens and rejects the idea of immutability. The latter should of course be the standard, but there is still enough space that can and must be filled with new approaches and ideas.

The theory of Homo stimulus tries to fill this gap and tries to give this change a tangible, albeit first, form in a scientific framework. At the same time, this creates a basis for argumentation that is suitable for leaving the circles of experts and for disseminating it in a general and comprehensible manner, because the discussion about human conditioning on this scale is not one that may only be conducted within small circles, certain milieus or in the *feuilleton*, but must rather become a topic for the general public. In the light and with the help of public observation, it seems easier to steer the torrential river in the right direction, instead of childishly naively hoping that this will happen on its own.

But with this thought we are still standing at the imaginary starting line. Therefore, this paper covers primarily the previous publications on the theory of Homo stimulus. These are therefore printed as they were published.¹

¹ On the one hand, this publication has been published in serious national and international media aimed at a broad public. On the other hand, parts of the activities published in this monograph also went through the usual scientific process and will be published in scientific journals in the near future or have already been published at the time of completion of this manuscript. A current listing can be found on the official

Redundancy is therefore given, but undoubtedly also creates memory values. Initial discussions and questions were raised from these publications, which are dealt with and intensified in a separate section.

It is therefore a documentation of an early phase, which can serve as a printed reference book, but in no way claims to represent the object of research conclusively and finally. How could she? The theory of Homo stimulus is undoubtedly interdisciplinary and should be treated as such. Surveys, experiments, studies and much more would therefore be necessary at various points in order to find a final form, to set the right priorities and to be able to draw conclusions for future developments.

The Erich von Werner Society is not yet in a position to do this at the present time. In many areas - just think of the broad field of neurosciences or behavioral economics, to name just two of so many - corresponding capacities are not available and therefore third party research or corresponding cooperation is required to substantiate,

presence of the Erich von Werner Society:
<https://www.understandandchange.com/press-and-media-reviews/>

adapt or, if necessary, reject individual points of the thesis.

These would be important tasks for the future, because the stimulus man, in all his individualized manifestations, is the consumer, the customer, the employee, the superior, the apprentice, the pupil, the student, the lover, the suffering, the thinker, the user, the standard-setter; in short, the living person of tomorrow. He is tomorrow. Maybe today already. So we have to learn to understand him and in the end we might find that we are already more Homo stimulus than we might want to admit to ourselves at the moment. If not, we probably belong to a dying element that will disappear more and more until perhaps, but this is pure speculation, causality itself, disappears in a sea of individualized stimuli. The fundamental questions that led to the theory of Homo stimulus are therefore not academic thought games, but ultimately the key to understanding the present and future. However, to open the door, appropriate explanation and classification patterns are required. A basic framework. Even if these would have to be partially revised again. The theory of Homo stimulus would be one such

approach and can therefore be useful in describing current developments and forecasting future ones.

Although it was pointed out at the beginning that the theory of the stimulus person as such can also be considered separately, it should be emphasized again in conclusion that this is not recommended. The Homo stimulus is an important part of the Age of Collective Individualism, but it needs to be classified and is undoubtedly connected with further developments - such as the change of times, behavioral capitalism, in a Western style, but also in a controlled sense, eroding realities of life or the so-called milieu struggle - which show the way into the future in constant interaction, influencing each other.

Separating what is not divisible may simplify, but could also cloud the view of what is relevant.

Andreas Herteux

The Homo stimulus

The creation of a new human being, marked by a Stimulus Society and Behavioral Capitalism, in the Age of Collective Individualism

- **The confrontation of the population with artificially generated stimuli has increased massively in recent decades**
- **The technological development meanwhile enables a stimulation in all areas of the personal life**
- **Getting used to fast and short stimuli**
- **These are not only passively consumed, but actively demanded and shaped**
- **The modern Stimulus Society has emerged**
- **This Stimulus Society has therefore conditioned a new person: the Homo stimulus**
- **The Stimulus Society, in combination with Behavioral Capitalism, has ushered in the Age of Collective Individualism**

At the beginning there should be a thesis: The world is changing at a furious pace. But it is not only she who is setting out on new paths, but also man himself. The Homo stimulus, the irritable human being, whose share of the total population is constantly increasing and who will be a majority in future generations, was created.

An evolutionary development? An adjustment? A product of external influence? It depends on the approach, but the following pages do not want to repeat the basics of the social sciences², there are undoubtedly better experiments for this, but rather to look at a development of conditioning to fast-frequented stimuli and their end product, the Homo stimulus, and to put these up for discussion. It remains a thesis that is intended to serve the understanding of a new reality. A first one, which is necessary because the changes are obvious and therefore require new approaches to explain them.

² Or other disciplines, because the approach is undoubtedly interdisciplinary

The new man, shaped by the Stimulus Society, is the one who made the success of Behavioral Capitalism³ possible in the first place and is an essential feature of the Age of Collective Individualism. The world of the present and the future would be unthinkable without the Homo stimulus and therefore it is necessary to name this conditioning, which has never been done in such a framework, and thus to create a generally understandable basis for understanding and discussion. It is the continuation of the eternal task that each new era imposes on us, and at the same time it carries with it the danger of resorting to obsolete models of the past to explain the present. But even if it may be the eternally same river of humanity to which we go, it never leads the same waters, as Heraclitus noted thousands of years ago.

But before the new person is to experience a more profound dedication, it seems advisable to explain in advance what this scripture means by a stimulus, that is, a so-called stimulus and the Stimulus Society from which

³ Cf. First Foundations of Behavioural Capitalism: Inventory of a new variety of capitalism, by Andreas Herteux, published by Erich von Werner Verlag, 2019, ISBN 978-3981900651, DOI 10.5281/zenodo.3469587

the Homo stimulus has grown up. However, this is not intended to be a departure from the scientific standard, at best a shortening.

A stimulus is defined as a stimulus that triggers or alters behavior by acting on a sensory organ. The suggestion is followed by a reaction. This reaction can be influenced by past stimuli.

So far at least the psychological definition, as it can be found in almost all accepted works. The distinction between reactive (first stimulus, then reaction) and operant behavior (first reaction, then stimulus) is of limited interest at the moment, because these points are simply secondary to the thesis and the objective.⁴

The basic principle is not difficult to understand and will be briefly presented here, even for people who only deal with such topics as a secondary matter:

The glaring sunlight makes your eyes close. A pleasant smell of food not only reminds you of your own hunger, but also of when the dish was last eaten. The human

⁴ Like many other points, such as investment.

being is therefore constantly exposed to stimuli, which he perceives almost continuously and in different ways, consciously and unconsciously. This view is simplistic, but nevertheless it can be said that a world without stimuli would be difficult to imagine.⁵

But hasn't he been living in a Stimulus Society since the beginning of time? One could be subject to this judgement if one were to take a very broad definition, and yet the definition of the modern Stimulus Society as it is understood in this writing is far more specific, limited and ultimately the designation for a historical development that refers to a veryspecific chronological sequence.

A modern stimulus society is generally understood to be a group of individuals who are exposed to stimuli with a high frequency of influence, usually artificially generated, and who have difficulty or difficulty in escaping them, or in some cases do not want to.

Therefore, a distinction is made between classical stimulation and a highly frequented stimulation, which has its origin in the commercialized and/or politicized

⁵ Simplification is forgiven for the benefit of the cause.

technological development, is intensified by its progress and thus, together with Behavioral Capitalism, has ushered in the Age of Collective Individualism in the Western world.⁶⁷

This may still sound abstract at the moment, but will be clarified later in the concrete development. Up to this point, however, the definition itself needs to be deepened.

A prerequisite for the establishment of a stimulus society is the possibility to confront the individual with the stimuli with great frequency.

This precondition of the Stimulus Society is elementary, because at this point there is a clear demarcation to a general understanding of irritation. The development of the stimulus society and thus ultimately of the homines stimuli cannot be separated from technological

⁶ First Foundations of Behavioural Capitalism: Inventory of a New Variety of Capitalism, by Andreas Herteux, published by Erich von Werner Verlag, 2019, ISBN 978-3981900651, DOI 10.5281/zenodo.3469587

⁷ Herteux, Andreas, Das Zeitalter des kollektiven Individualismus, e.g. statements in the context of this monograph or <https://www.freitag.de/autoren/aherteux>

development, which in turn is closely linked to scientific knowledge and its use by politics (e.g. political marketing), society (e.g. development of social milieus) and, above all, the economy (e.g. development into a consumer society and, later on, Behavioral Capitalism). Rather, it is an inseparable interaction of the forces, which will, however, be presented in a clearer way.

Stimulation in modern times is mostly done by short, fast and repetitive (artificial) stimuli.

This is an important finding, as a gradual change in the nature of perception has been initiated, as the stimuli are of a different nature than a few decades ago. They are also often artificially produced.

Many of the social media, means of communication or services used very often today,⁸ offer fast information and entertainment, which is not and never was intended to be used in the long term.⁹ It also remains irrelevant

⁸ Just think of services like WhatsApp, Snapchat, Youtube or Instagram.

⁹ For example, short entertaining and informative videos, the presentation of large amounts of posts in which the brain filters out interesting ones in fractions of a second, or getting

whether the stimuli were present first, or the desire for them. The question is not to the point, because it was rather a dancing together, which became faster and faster. A mutual increase and demand. It's the result that counts.

The brain is therefore conditioned in a certain way, which may not be comprehensible to people who have not yet been exposed to this process from a young age, and yet the result, based on their own empirical knowledge, is not even for them to overlook: whether it is the means of communication (e.g. smartphone) of third parties or simply the faster cuts of films and their comparison with older screen products. Whether a dependency on short and fast stimuli can also arise here is not to be discussed here. Later on, corresponding studies will be linked, which suggest this. For the time being, however, another central feature of the modern stimulus society should be pointed out:

used to the constant beeping of the smartphone. This implements a process of habituation, which manifests itself in a change of perception.

The exposure to stimuli is often voluntary

While commercial stimuli (e.g. TV advertising) in particular were often perceived as annoying in earlier days, today's confrontation with them is not only based on free will, but is even actively demanded. It is therefore too brief to speak of a "bombardment", because it is a process in which both sides take on the role of sender and receiver.¹⁰

Thus, the smartphone is a constant companion and the constant checking of posts, messages and notifications is almost standard for some people every second.¹¹ The boundary between commercial and private stimuli is becoming increasingly blurred, opening the door to the most intimate sphere of the human being, which was usually closed to earlier "stimulation methods". This border is now open. The distinction between

¹⁰ It does not matter whether this interaction is only operated by humans or also by a machine/ AI. Here we must refer to the levy in the sense of the model of behavioral capitalism.

¹¹ Of course we exaggerate a little at this point, but the human-smartphone symbiosis is also a perceptible reality.

internal/external motivation or between requested and received stimuli is becoming increasingly insignificant and difficult to distinguish.

A weighty difference that at some point¹² gave rise to a new variety of capitalism, Behavioral Capitalism, whose model explains the mechanisms described in depth. But we will not go that far at this point, we will stick to the stimuli, usually artificially set, which originally serve a purpose. This, however, already suggested the use of the word "conditioning", where often chains of associations such as "behaviorism", "framing" or "priming" are created, and yet these chains would not be sufficient to describe the development of a new era. However, it remains true:

<p>The aim of artificial stimulation is to influence the behavior</p>
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This insight is not new and certainly not new. It does not matter whether the stimulus is intended to induce the

¹² First Foundations of Behavioral Capitalism: A New Variety of Capitalism Gains Power and Influence, Andreas Herteux, Erich von Werner Verlag, 2019, ISBN 978-3981900675, DOI 10.5281/zenodo.3469568

perceiver to make a purchase, to click, to look only or to modify behavior. The same applies, as always:

Not every milieu or individual reacts equally strongly to the same stimulus. But no one is completely immune.

It is understandable that not every milieu or individual reacts in the same way to the same stimulus, as they have different views, dispositions, values and interests. This is not a new insight either, otherwise, for example, extensive segmentation in marketing would not be necessary. And yet the difference must be pointed out once again:

In this writing it is not a question of whether certain stimuli reach their goal, but rather of conditioning and a shift in perception towards short, highly-frequented stimuli or even being driven forward by the homines stimuli. It is about the global consequences. It is about a world in which the sensory organs are confronted with an enormous amount of stimuli at a breathtaking speed. This is a reality in which there is already a considerable process of habituation. It is about how the human being changes in his behavior and in his view of his own reality in a sustainable way. Change the methodology and

structure, not the individual stimulus. The human being is conditioned and newly formed.

Many stimuli miss their target completely and/or get lost in a sea of stimuli. Nevertheless, they influence the way in which those who are permanently exposed to the stimuli perceive them.¹³

It would therefore be a misinterpretation to associate the terms "Stimulus Society" and "Homo stimulus" exclusively with more skilful manipulation, whether for economic or political purposes. There would be a frightening carelessness, because in fact a shift in perception, a new incarnation, is at the centre, because even if the stimulation originally had a commercial-political background, today the former stimulus receivers are often, if not usually, also transmitters and enter into a stimulus dialogue, just think of those millions who seek distraction on Instagram, Youtube and Co.

¹³ At this point the distinction between consciously perceived and subliminal stimuli should be deliberately neglected. It is not relevant for the basic thesis, but it is relevant for its later, more in-depth elaboration. This monograph, however, is intended to document the initial principles and open up the field to be researched, not to harvest it finally.

This process seems to have been completed for some of the milieus, while for others it still seems to be at an early stage, and in some cases it may not go beyond that stage.

In the long term, the exposure to stimuli changes the way of thinking, perception, decision-making processes and communication of the recipients of the stimuli.

The Homo stimulus is created, the stimulus man, which can be defined as follows:

By a Homo stimulus, one understands such a conditioned person, who is used to a permanent confrontation with highly frequented, short as well as artificial stimuli and who can or wants to elude them only partially or hardly. On the contrary, certain stimuli are often demanded or a corresponding stimulus dialogue is initiated.

These changes in perception have long-term consequences for the relationship of consciousness with its environment. At least that is what numerous studies suggest.¹⁴ The theory of the Stimulus Society and the Homo

¹⁴ This is not conjecture. In the meantime, there are strong indications that support this thesis:

-
- With the stimulus satiation the attention span decreases (see study of the Max Planck Institute: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-019-09311-w>)
Perhaps it would be more useful to note, however, that it does not sink, but is conditioned to short and rapid stimuli.
 - According to observations, parts of the brain become measurably more active and sensitive during intensive smartphone use for thumb stimuli. A positive effect. In general, manual dexterity outside the usual professions is likely to have increased. But this is again only a thesis.
 - Some studies suggest that intensive use of digital media, which are responsible for a variety of stimuli, exacerbate fears, attention disorders, lack of exercise or depression or create perception problems in the first place. An example from Great Britain:
(<https://www.rsph.org.uk/uploads/assets/uploaded/62be270a-a55f-4719-ad668c2ec7a74c2a.pdf>)
 - Some research claims to have demonstrated a link between ADHD and digital consumption: <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/article-abstract/2687861>

The list can be continued for a long time, but there is no doubt that the research is more in the direction of proving a damaging effect of the stimuli than a beneficial one. Preliminary theses, such as that visual media would cause the cerebral cortex of children to shrink, are often presented as fact. However, the studies only allow this conclusion to be drawn to a limited extent and other causes remain open.

stimulus only draws the necessary conclusions for a new era.

The human being is reprogrammed in parts. By skilled manipulators? No, also by himself, because he accepts the modern Stimulus Society in many, though not all, cases and makes his contribution.

It has already been noted that the depth of conditioning varies depending on the environment and also

(Examples:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/adb.12570>
or alternatively

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0195549>) As this is a new phenomenon, there are of course no long-term studies that can be interpreted in various ways, and even then the problem of comparison groups will arise in the future.

The only thing that remains important for us at this point is that the intensified stimulus satiation has consequences. The person is reprogrammed and conditioned by the stimuli. Whether this is to be evaluated positively or negatively, we should not be interested at the moment, because in a networked world with manifold influencing factors this is not as easy to decide as some would like. Perhaps the world of collective individualism needs far less of the old, but all the more of the stimulus people? Nevertheless, it should be noted that the process of habituation and adaptation is a two-way process, i.e. on both sides, the sender and the receiver.

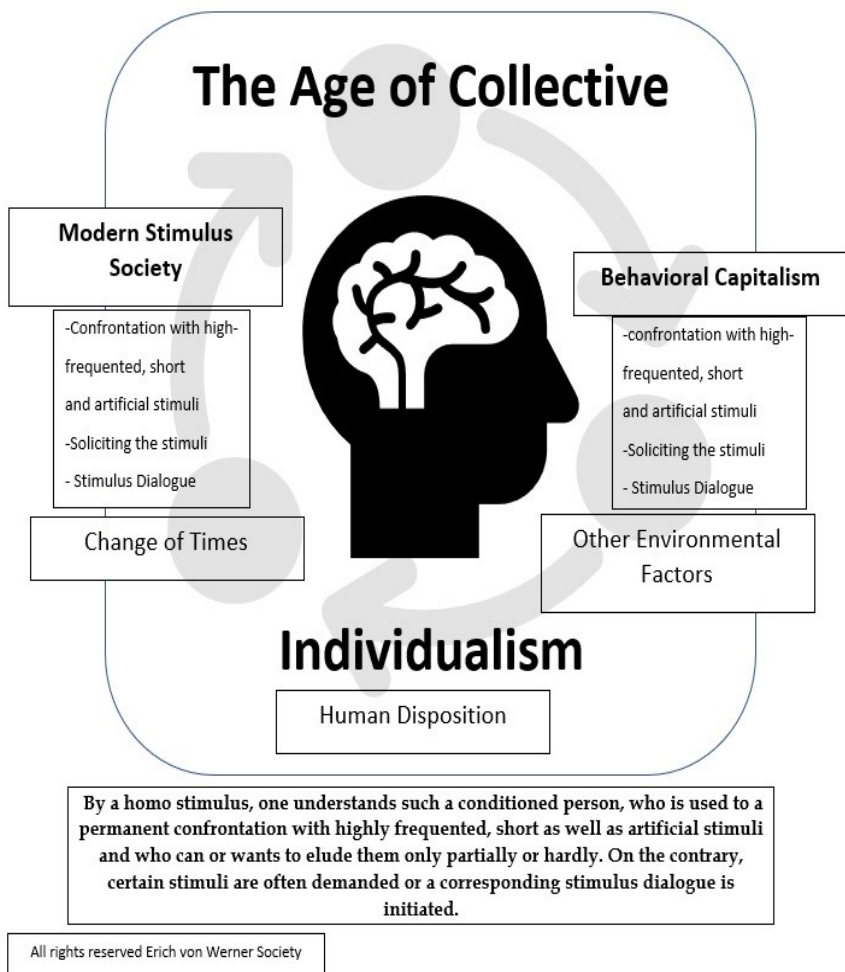
individually.¹⁵ Only a part of mankind has therefore already passed the "evolutionary" development to Homo stimulus. Future generations, however, will grow up in an Age of Collective Individualism and will thus be confronted with stimuli practically from birth. If they want to enjoy the benefits of a high-tech world of conditioning, they will hardly be able to escape.¹⁶

With these explanations we want to conclude the attempt to delimit and define the Stimulus Society and immediately ask for apologies for the abstraction. Subsequently, the study of the history of the Stimulus Society will be advanced.

¹⁵ This not only refers to environmental factors, but also to natural facilities.

¹⁶ This is a global phenomenon, as development here will be volatile, even in developing countries. While there is perhaps a permanent lack of the simplest infrastructure, that for modern stimulation will be created or already exists, because even today the fascinating and frightening contrast between poverty and hunger, with the simultaneous presence of a smartphone, can be observed even in the poorest countries, which do not necessarily have dictatorial structures. These leaps may not fit into popular development schemes at first glance, but they are and remain reality.

The Creation of the Homo stimulus



The Development of the Modern Stimulus Society

The (modern) Stimulus Society did not come from the obscure nothingness, but has a long history of origins.¹⁷ This will now be examined in more detail below.

In the 19th century at the latest, the conviction that the human mind and soul are dispensable and that only the right switches need to be operated to trigger a determinable reaction became more and more influential in the scientific world. Driven by the industrial revolution, a new image of mankind slowly developed: the individual in itself is nothing more than a complex biological machine. The individual components only had to be understood in order to ultimately become a creator oneself. Of course, not everyone, especially of course the clerical authorities, shared these views, and yet they prevail in the end. Man was ultimately reduced more and more to the earthly, the visible. Science versus myth and religion. Explainable matter against psychic soul. Pure Empire

¹⁷ The fact that different factors must interact with each other was clearly pointed out more than once.

against inner psychological processes. If we look at it from the philosophical point of view, we can see here materialism and its varieties of naturalism and realism in their pure form.¹⁸ Liberated from clerical fetters, the riddle of man now had to be solved and the result was a high of science, pseudo-science and popular literature in this and related fields.¹⁹ Old questions of philosophy

¹⁸ Significantly, the new belief in technology parallel to science also plays a major role in contemporary literature and has helped to spread the new ideas to the public. Although many of these works ultimately represented nothing more than rapturous utopia, they were nevertheless part of a creative new spirit: everything is explainable, nothing is unattainable. Numerous literary works that are still known today, such as Mary Wollstonecraft Schelley's "Frankenstein" (or the modern Prometheus, 1818) or Jules Verne's "Journey to the Center of the Earth" (1864), were written and fascinated generations.

¹⁹ Let us recall the following popular ideas, which changed the image of mankind in the long term. Not every writing still stands up to scientific scrutiny today. Some even had terrible consequences. This incomplete list is therefore about influence, not scientific value:

- Theory of Evolution (Charles Darwin, 1859)
- Psychoanalysis (Sigmund Freud, from 1883)
- Anthropogeny (Ernst Haeckel, 1874)
- Theory of inheritance (Georg Mendel, from 1856)

could be reformulated and empirically researched. What makes a man? What is human behavior? Is it controllable? Subsequently, these questions were approached from different perspectives, which are separated here for illustrative purposes only, although separatism should make little sense here:

-
- Inequality of human races (from Joseph Arthur de Gobineau 1853)
 - Mass Psychology (Gustave Le Bon, 1895)
 - Popularisation of racism (Houston Stewart Chamberlain, from 1899)
 - Popularization of communism (Karl Marx, from 1849)

- Science (mass psychology,²⁰ individual psychology,²¹ biology,^{22,23} law, etc.)
- Business (sales, brand building, brand management, advertising, etc.)²⁴

²⁰ A milestone here is certainly Gustave Le Bon's "Psychology of the Masses" from 1895, Le Bon's is considered the founder of mass psychology. Deeply influenced even by Charles Darwin and Ernst Haeckel, he in turn radiated not only on Sigmund Freud, who in his 1921 work "Mass Psychology and Ego Analysis" refers directly to the Frenchman, but also on Hitler and Stalin. Especially the passages on propaganda in Hitler's "Mein Kampf" show amazing parallels to Le Bon's work.

²¹ Although there are also predecessors, this is usually attributed to Sigmund Freud. Since then, this sector has been expanded many times and knows numerous individual disciplines.

²² This begins with Darwin and continues up to brain research.

²³ In the sense that it must regulate the relations between people and their behaviour by law. The questions of, for example, legal capacity, will, maturity or accountability are of decisive relevance there.

²⁴ The word "sale" may sound profane, but as long as there is no total sellers' market, coupled with a monopoly or at least an oligopoly, the goods in question must be sold. This in turn

- Politics (political propaganda, advertising, communication and other areas)
- Technology (types of communication itself and their means)²⁵

These areas merged and were interrelated. Only in the alcove. Later on, politics and business acted as merging elements²⁶ and ensured the practical implementation of some theory and thus also the emission of stimuli.²⁷ If

required corresponding considerations, which were continually refined.

²⁵ The stimulus must always find its way to the recipients. Technological progress has made it possible to broaden and expand it more and more.

²⁶ Critics may object that this bipolar representation could be supplemented by the free press, for example, but on the one hand we do not want to get lost in too much detail and on the other hand it can be argued that in the case of a primacy of politics the press was usually also brought under control, whereas in the case of a primacy of economics the latter can also be regarded as a market participant. In fact, this clear demarcation does not exist either, and it serves only to simplify matters.

²⁷ While in the USA, for example, the capitalist economic system very quickly took on a dominant role in the emission of stimuli, the state often played a more important role in

these two factors of power were still competing until the Second World War, capitalism will gain the primacy of practice at the latest after the end of the cruel battle, the interactions will begin to dominate and align themselves. At least in the Western world, while in the socialist zone of influence, the stimulus and practical use of the findings was further shaped by the political level. However, this eastern development should interest us less. Instead, we look at the western sphere of influence after the end of World War II. The following phases, which are characterised by the economic system, can be identified here:²⁸

- **From 1950:** Orientation of economic marketing towards production due to post-war demand. This is - after the war - so large that the products practically sell themselves. Large applications are not necessary at all.

Europe and the rest of the world. The fascist and communist blocs were of course extreme.

²⁸ It should be noted that these can vary slightly over time for individual countries in the West.

In the political arena, too, the population is grateful for an appropriate offer of political content and accepts it. Especially in countries like West Germany, after the experience with National Socialist propaganda, restraint is practically a reason of state.²⁹ The influence of irritation is still strong, limited to a few media and the public³⁰. Withdrawal is easy and the stimuli are even directly linked to increasing wealth and mass consumption.³¹

²⁹ Moreover, with the onset of the Cold War, a clear external image of the enemy crystallized, which could be used profitably for political messages.

³⁰ Here we are talking specifically about media such as newspapers, advertising papers, advertising at the point of sale or in the immediate vicinity or radio. Although television started in many western countries, if one disregards entertaining experiments in the 30s, usually as early as the 50s, it reached only a fraction of consumers.

³¹ There was even the popular thesis that mass consumption would eliminate the social hierarchies of society. Quasi capitalist socialism.

- **From 1960:** Orientation towards sales methods and distribution. The demand is still gigantic, but it is necessary to remember the customer. Scientific findings on influencing are gaining in importance.³²

The same applies to political marketing. A large part of society is still satisfied with the supply, but towards the middle and end of the decade the first demand for political goods begins to emerge, which can no longer be satisfied by the current supply. The first political movements

³² The basics of marketing are of course much older, because they are as old as selling itself. If we look only at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, we also find very concrete reflections in Gustave Le Bon's "Psychology of the Masses" of 1895;

"[...] Thus, one of the most important tasks of statesmen is to baptize the things that the masses detest under their old names with popular or at least meaningless names. The power of words is so great that well-chosen terms are enough to make the most hated things acceptable to the masses. [...]"

The basics were therefore already in place. Now it was more about the concrete implementation and for this theories like behaviorism provided new approaches.

beyond the established spectrum are being noticed by a broad public.³³

The methods of transmitting stimuli are becoming more and more widespread as television becomes more and more popular. They are not yet perceived as unpleasant. On the contrary, many Western countries are still very satisfied with the prosperity and consumption they have achieved.³⁴

- **From 1970:** Orientation towards the market. Demand is saturated and producers are forced to

³³ In the 1960s, a generational conflict developed that found its discharge in the protests against the Vietnam War or in anti-capitalist movements, among other things. Political impulses and alternatives thus emerged outside the establishment. At first these were loud, but should still develop their effect. For a long time people did not know how to deal with these new milieus.

³⁴ However, the thesis of social standardization through mass consumption is dropped and more or less the opposite is now postulated: from 1965 at the latest, this approach will also be critically examined.

research consumer needs more closely and make targeted offers. This also includes a deeper and experimental (e.g. behavioral research, brain research, etc.) investigation of the often theoretical knowledge about human behavior, some of which was already established in the 19th century. At the same time, criticism of mass consumption is finally emerging from its niche.

The political market is first of all following the changed market situation: the established political forces are adapting successfully in some cases and where this is not successful, more and more extra-parliamentary opposition movements are establishing themselves as new providers. In the meantime it is obvious that they will exert lasting political influence. Their march through and into the institutions is imminent.

Concrete stimulus is now needed to be able to sell products, be they economic or political. Despite the growing criticism of stimulation, the established media are a good means of doing so, as

they clearly dominate the market for stimulation.³⁵

- **From 1980:** Orientation towards competition. The market is highly competitive and market share is gained by those who can present unique selling points. Image and brand management are becoming increasingly important. Parallel to this, the perception mechanisms of the brain are being researched even more intensively and are being applied in the application.³⁶

Similarly, more and more political players are emerging who are able to win market shares (=

³⁵ Criticism is a stylistic device of the times. It would be meaningless to make a distinction between politics and economics here, because it would be a comprehensive questioning of the Western system.

³⁶ These include, for example, elements such as the "eye camera", which closely monitors which goods in a supermarket are perceived by a customer how and for how long, from which in turn it is deduced how the consumer goods could be placed on the shelves at the most sales-promoting location.

votes). The established political forces are trying to incorporate the unsatisfied demand for political goods (e.g. environmental protection) into their existing brand core, but this is only partially successful. Political marketing is more and more oriented towards economic marketing.

Stimulus through advertising is now omnipresent and part of the consumer society. The criticism of this is now socially acceptable, but the suggestions are nevertheless accepted.³⁷

- **From 1990:** Orientation towards the milieu. Society has changed in recent decades. Customers must be addressed individually in their reality of life. Only very few products still work on their own, the competition is fierce. The

³⁷ The social situation had calmed down, while at the same time the political alternative to the West, the communist system, was losing its appeal massively and it became more and more apparent that it was on the verge of collapse. In addition, a new generation was growing up that had already been born into a consumer society. The milieus changed and split.

presumed findings from behavioral and brain research are now considered indispensable. The milieus that have emerged allow consumer criticism and unbridled mass consumption to coexist comfortably.³⁸

At the same time, politics is also increasingly orienting itself towards milieu models in order to reach people. Here too, competition has increased. More and more the conviction is gaining ground that image and brand management are more important than the product, in this case the political content, itself. The use of manipulation techniques via language and images reaches a climax.³⁹

Politics, media and business are now exhausting the possibilities of transmitting stimuli through existing means of communication and reaching a maximum level of perfection. However, mobile

³⁸ Whereby the side of mass consumption is clearly the bigger one. Self-realization is becoming increasingly important.

³⁹ Today these techniques would be called framing or priming, for example.

phones and the Internet promise an end to this dominance, although these new possibilities still play a subordinate role.

Terms such as "stimulus satiation" have already penetrated everyday language, but the last two generations already grew up with it and therefore, despite the increase in the intensity of stimuli, often see no need for withdrawal.⁴⁰

- **From 2000:** Expansion of the constantly developing milieu observation through new media and technologies. The digital world massively expands the possibilities to reach customers and opens up completely new perspectives on all levels. In addition, completely new markets and business areas are opening up, which are slowly shaking the previous economic and political

⁴⁰ The term "fun society" is often used for the 90s to describe it globally for western countries. This sweeping term is of course not correct, although it does point to massive social changes by bringing the emerging hedonistic milieu to the fore.

power relations⁴¹ Behavior is becoming - almost unnoticed - a production factor and Behavioral Capitalism is beginning to establish itself as a new variety of capitalism.⁴²

The world is spinning faster and the fragmentation of milieus due to the change of times⁴³ releases a hardly foreseeable dynamic. The safe is

⁴¹ For example, today's technology giants Google (1998), Ebay (1995) and Amazon (1994), founded in the 1990s, experienced their breakthrough during this period, while others such as Facebook (2004) or Youtube (2005) were only just founded.

⁴² First Foundations of Behavioral Capitalism: A New Variety of Capitalism Gains Power and Influence, Andreas Herteux, Erich von Werner Verlag, 2019, ISBN 978-3981900675, DOI 10.5281/zenodo.3469568

⁴³ **Definition:**

A change of time is understood to be a period of time in which its individual elements dynamically influence each other in such a way that they can bring about a reorganisation of the previous (global) power relations.

These elements are:

- 1) Technological progress
- 2) Rise of new competitors on the world markets
- 3) Weakness of the previous ruling elements
- 4) Changes in environmental conditions
- 5) Lack of prospects

called into question. A circumstance that sows the seeds of alienation that will be sown in the following decade.

In contrast to the economy, the political world reacts to technical change and the changing times with a significant delay⁴⁴ and prefers to rely for too long on individual, aging milieus that remain loyal to a particular political party, often regardless of content.

Moreover, one is under the illusion that the strong influence on those forces which the majority of the population has used as a means of information (e.g. newspapers, television) will continue to dominate communication in the future. They do not realise, or realise much too late, that a controllable small bottleneck, which all ships have to pass, has slowly turned into a wide river that becomes an ocean. The digital world will remain alien and incomprehensible for so long,

⁴⁴ This term is already euphemistic, because in reality large parts of the political establishment do not react at all and do not understand the change of times.

even though mobile phones and the Internet are clearly gaining ground and modern smartphones will massively increase their market share in the mobile sector by 2007 at the latest.

The stimulus satiation has now become a stimulus bombardment. However, since generations are used to it, this increase, outside of certain milieus, hardly plays a relevant role in media criticism. In addition, possibilities for dialogical stimulation are also established. It is less and less a one-way communication, but the active demand of stimuli plays a central role in the new Stimulus Society.

- **From 2010:** The markets have changed completely. The customer now has comprehensive information options. Internet use and the smartphone are part of everyday life.⁴⁵ The market is

⁴⁵ All that is needed is a simple ride on the tram in a large city and the observation that a large number of those on the move will be permanently occupied with the smartphone and the knowledge that entire generations will be or have been shaped in this way.

now transparent in a new way, which requires completely new strategies.

The siphoning off of individual data and the identification of the needs of the individual customer moves into the centre of attention. In order to maximize this, the customer is maximally embedded and corresponding information is siphoned off. By far not all customers and realities of life can be reached with this method, but still a steadily growing share.⁴⁶ The principle of the stimulus dialogue, according to which stimuli are also requested by the former recipients (= customers, voters, interested parties,

Of course, this can also be substantiated with figures, as there were less than 25 million mobile phone contracts in Germany in 1999, but by 2018 there will be slightly less than 130 million. An impressive number with a clearly recognizable trend: It is not at all intended to escape these stimuli; on the contrary, they are wanted and, in the form of the device, always carried with you. Perhaps there is already a certain degree of dependence.

⁴⁶ Ultimately it is only a biological question until every living generation will have grown up in a world full of charms.

consumers, etc.), changes communication in the long term.

Behavioral Capitalism is firmly established and is gaining more and more power and influence.⁴⁷

The established political forces are still predominantly oriented towards the outdated milieu models. She is no longer aware of the intensified struggle in the milieu⁴⁸ and the further erosion of the realities of life, or only marginally. If politics had once approached and adopted economic advertising methods, it is now showing too little willingness to deal with the new possibilities.

Proven stimuli and forms of communication lose their effectiveness. The digital world was underestimated as a source of information, just as the

⁴⁷ O "First Foundations of Behavioral Capitalism: A New Variety of Capitalism Gains Power and Influence", Andreas Herteux, Erich von Werner Verlag, 2019, ISBN 978-3981900675, DOI 10.5281/zenodo.3469568

⁴⁸ The comprehensive elaboration of a theory of milieu struggle is one of the next tasks of the Erich von Werner Society.

impact of the previously successful media (e.g. television) is still overestimated.

People are not sufficiently prepared for the new ways of communication, as well as for the changing times in general, and so they make strategic mistakes that lead to alienation and a false assessment of the needs of the voters. The result is a massive loss of market share (=voter votes) and the chance for new political forces, which do not necessarily have to appear in party form, to win it quickly.

The constant presence of stimuli is already normal for large parts of the milieu and is not perceived as unpleasant. On the contrary, people like to expose themselves to them voluntarily as long as they satisfy their own needs. In many cases the stimuli are even explicitly desired and their absence is considered a deficiency.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Internet addiction is now also recognised as a disease (classification according to ICD-11). Smartphone dependency could soon follow. Of course, not everyone who is eagerly waiting for the next message or checking his or her likes or status is considered ill. We're talking extremes here.

The combination of Behavioral Capitalism and Stimulus Society heralds a new era: The Collective Individualism.

- **The Age of Collective Individualism:**⁵⁰ Try to embed the customer completely and experience his needs directly and meet them as soon as possible. For this purpose, a permanent data capture through digital networking is indispensable. Individual control via algorithms and bots in one's own digital life reality with simultaneous merging of the digital and real worlds. Consumption is becoming more individual and yet it is still only an illusion, since the methods are controlled collectively. The complete establishment of Collective Individualism, however, still fails because of milieu struggles. It must

⁵⁰ Definition:

Collective individualism is understood to be an individualism in which the individual is embedded in such a way that individual self-development can take place within an invisible or barely visible framework. Collective individualism is at the same time the designation of a period of time.

therefore be regarded as incomplete. Living in a world of its own, however, will be possible to a large extent.

The political establishment continues to lose market share and will partially disappear into insignificance if no radical turnaround is achieved. Individual parties and new movements are catching up with modernity, but do not have the same data and embedding mechanisms as the established corporations. New forms of political marketing will therefore be established.

However, the groups do have the relevant behavioral data, and the question of whether these companies will not therefore have a far greater influence on the existing order in the future than they already have must certainly be asked.⁵¹ In general, however, there is a tendency for the primacy of the economy to prevail in the Western world, while in guided capitalism of Eastern

⁵¹ This is of course a possible future, whether it will come to that, is to be awaited. The trend is there.

character, politics shows the will to dominate Behavioral Capitalism. Just think of China's social credit system. The fact that both worlds will clash brutally and inevitably should be mentioned, but is not relevant for this passage.

Technology continues to advance and improve communication methods and embedding possibilities. The stimulus is now permanently applied in both directions. The original sender (seller, political force, medium, etc..), whose role is likely to be completely taken over by an AI at some point, stimulates the original receiver (customer, voter, prospective customer, etc..) and the Homo stimulus in turn transmits continuously⁵². need impulses, without this approach being questioned by the broad masses. A

⁵² It is relatively certain that the number of decisions that are no longer made by humans but by an AI will also increase on this side. The electronic assistant is already a reality in some areas. Just think of health and fitness apps. Then why not let the AI in a few years completely do the tiresome weekly shopping? After all, she soon knows her own needs better than anyone has ever known them.

dialogue is created that finally replaces old marketing methods. Since the exchange of stimuli satisfies one's own desire, many stimuli are perceived as more positive when they cross the threshold of perception. In the end, they serve the research of needs and operation and lead to an individualized reality in which everything revolves around the Homo stimulus and which was created just for him.⁵³ Criticism, it can be assumed, slowly goes out of fashion with the disappearance of older generations and disappears into the niche.

The form of stimulus transmission could also evolve, because if the effect of stimuli has been described up to now, the impression has been created that they inevitably have an external

⁵³ Since the world is individual, but it is formed for all according to the same rules, it is worth remembering that we call this age, that of collective individualism.

effect. This will also largely shape the near future for a large part of the population.⁵⁴

However, there is a probability that the Homo stimulus will soon be exposed not only to external but also to internal stimuli or will voluntarily expose itself to them. This means nothing less than that the inside of the body is directly influenced, whereby it should be noted that the term "stimulus" must now be defined in the broadest possible sense.

The idea that controlling stimuli are triggered directly in the body, preferably probably in the brain, is an unpopular but nevertheless realistic one.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ The distinction "internal/external" is not a clean one at this point, but will be clarified in the following. The author of these lines is aware of the fact that a separation makes only limited sense due to the activity of the inner activities in the human body. At this point, however, he is less concerned with scientific accuracy than with vivid and vivid representation.

⁵⁵ But is it really so unpopular? Just think of the rapid market growth of EMS sports studios. Muscle build-up with the help of electronic impulses has long been established and here, too, one can see the further development from the idea of "repair", previously electricity was primarily used for pain

In the end, a mixing of humans with the machine would be just as conceivable as chemical or genetic stimulus settings. In a few years' time, the technological change brought about by the change of times will allow interventions that still seem absurd today but are in part already on the verge of a breakthrough. Moreover, the targeted stimulation of the brain is no longer an unknown factor. One need only think, for example, of the current findings with active prostheses, in which implants under the skin trigger a coordinated electrical stimulation, i.e. a stimulus, which in turn sends the corresponding impulses to the corresponding nerve cells in the brain, thus giving the person concerned more mobility again. Experiments in which electrical stimuli work on the area of the brain responsible for anxiety and nervousness have been so successful that the treatment of severe depression with the

therapy or as a rehabilitation measure, to the idea of human optimisation very nicely. Yes, the objection that in the end it is an external application may come, but who says it will remain so?

help of implanted electrodes has now been used successfully for more than 10 years to combat the most severe mental disorders.⁵⁶ Deep brain stimulation could become a fashion trend. The development from repair and life extension to optimization will certainly be one.

Whether through chemistry, implants, physical networking or other means - the optimisation of the human being has only just begun.⁵⁷ Some milieus will benefit more quickly, some later and others probably never. But this aspect of the change of times cannot be stopped. The internal stimulus is thus already a reality and if we think about it more closely, it always has been. Just think of medication for depression or drugs. What is this less than a biochemical intervention

⁵⁶ Although the number of 200 patients worldwide so far does not sound impressive, a start has been made. The risks, of, forgive the profane expression, hole in the head, on the other hand, are manageable, the promise, on the other hand, of not only fighting disease in the long term, but also increasing performance, is enormous.

⁵⁷ And with it also the fight against aging and death.

that ultimately changes the nature and behavior of the person?⁵⁸ The difference is, as already emphasized, hidden in the fact that now no weaknesses will be compensated, but the human being will be optimized more than ever.

Implementation of the Stimulus Society

So much for our brief foray into the history and possible future of the Stimulus Society, which is ultimately

⁵⁸ But this should only be a digression and in the end there are only two things to take away from it:

- That the technological aspect of the change of times will intensify not only external but also internal impulses. However, it remains to be seen exactly which ones will prevail. However, the classic stimuli from outside will continue to play a more dominant role. For now. It is unthinkable that a "holiday" will at some point only be carried out in the "head" with appropriate stimulation, but this should not be ruled out even now.
- And hopefully you, dear reader, will also take with you a certain curiosity about these new technologies. There is a lot of information. It is often already possible today to do much more than even the boldest dreams suggest

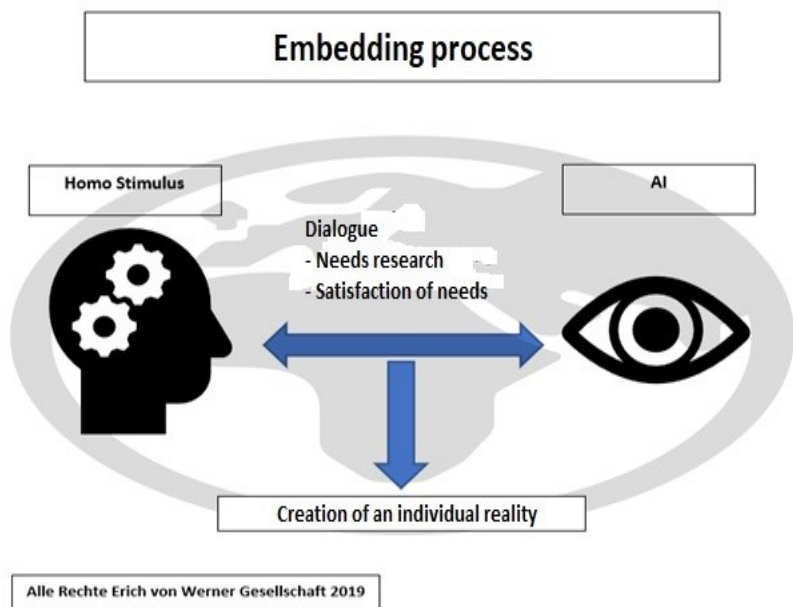
always part of that of Collective Individualism itself. The fact that the brevity of the presentation always requires a concentration of information is part of the nature of things.

In the end it was all about the thesis of the Stimulus Society and Homo stimuli and only this. All in all, it can be said that the number and intensity of stimuli have increased since the end of the Second World War, have literally "exploded" with the onset of the change of times, and stimulation is practically indispensable for entire milieus today. The Stimulus Society is therefore a reality. The same applies to Behavioral Capitalism, which is inseparable from it. For Homo stimuli the intensified stimuli have become an indispensable part of the individual life. He even claims them. The person was conditioned and trained. Usually on processing a variety of short, rapid stimuli within a short period of time. However, this habituation is not part of a purposeful conspiracy,⁵⁹ but

⁵⁹ Such "re-education theses" are repeatedly brought forward when observing such a historical process. The belief that a single force or even individual people can exert such an influence permanently is absurd. Rather, all people are subject to this process. Some profit and some do not. He cannot be prevented.

rather in the course of a development in which manifold forces and their interactions first clashed and were later dynamised by the change of times.

The resulting Homo stimulus will not only be accustomed to the stimuli, but will also demand them and be ready to react with its own stimuli, thus enabling embedded communication and action.



He enters into dialogue with the aim of researching and fulfilling his own needs. This dialogue enables him to reach a maximum level of personal self-realization and to create his own reality, which has him at its center.

The question of future discussions will therefore not be how to prevent the Homo stimulus. No, it is already reality and with each new generation its share will grow. No, the discussion must revolve around how life is to be shaped in the Age of Collective Individualism and what degree of self-determination must be maintained. There is much, if not everything, at stake.

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Interview with Andreas Herteux

Mr Herteux, you describe a new type of person who will dominate the future. What is this Homo stimulus actually?

A Homo stimulus is a person who is conditioned in such a way, who is used to a permanent confrontation with highly frequented, short and - as a rule - artificial stimuli and who can or wants to evade them hardly or only partially. On the contrary, certain stimuli are often demanded or a corresponding stimulus dialogue is initiated.

This sounds complicated at first.

But it's not. Imagine your everyday life. They travel to work on the subway and see dozens of people around them using their smartphones. The impression that these people consider permanent confrontation with stimuli to be normal, are looking for, perhaps need, could therefore arise even if you have never heard the term "Homo stimulus".

Modern media allow the recipient of a stimulus to be addressed in a more targeted, trenchant, quicker, more comprehensive and direct manner. At the same time, this development has also changed the classic media, because texts are often shorter, simpler or cuts in visual media are faster and more intensive. We therefore live in a modern Stimulus Society.

Parallel to this, however, the human being also develops, who simply gets used to this form of stimulus response and adapts to it. It is therefore always mutually influencing interactions that have shaped these changes.

Whether this is only a conditioning process, i.e. a learning process, or whether the brain functions have also changed massively in such an environment, we can leave open at the moment, although numerous studies assume that the brain, and presumably also the nervous system, adapts accordingly and re-programs itself in a certain sense. As is well known, the areas cannot be clearly separated anyway. However, in the field of neurosciences, there is no doubt that there is still a lot of research to be done in this respect.

What is the central difference between the attractions of the past and those of today?

The central difference is that all the stimuli in earlier times, and it should not matter whether they were generated by television, radio, decorated shop windows, catalogues or whatever, usually did not manage to penetrate into the innermost private sphere of the person permanently and establish themselves there as an essential part of their own life. The relationship between the person and the stimulus was simply different. You can turn off the TV. However, modern media often mix up person, personality and appeal, since it is usually an embedding, a personal cut. Just think, for example, of the importance of social media or just their likes for self-esteem. This difference is the key to understanding a new era, that of Collective Individualism, which is shaped by, among other things, the modern Stimulus Society, but also by Behavioral Capitalism. Added to this, of course, is the sheer quantity and intensity of the stimuli, which has been enhanced by new technical possibilities.

Is the Homo stimulus easier to manipulate?

It is undisputed that a large part of the new stimuli, which are today created in large numbers by machine or artificially by algorithms, serve to produce a certain behavior. However, Homo stimulus is used to dealing with a large number of them simultaneously. He does not perceive most of the stimuli at all, but has developed certain filtering techniques, which in turn depend on the person and his or her character. The attempt to influence them therefore often comes to nothing.

However, the fact that the stimulus transmitters in the modern Stimulus Society have more possibilities to penetrate to the innermost, suggests that influencing behavior has not become more difficult. Not for nothing did human behavior become the production factor of a completely new form of economic activity: Behavioral Capitalism, which could not have been established without technological development and other interactions. Today, however, it is the dominant form of capitalism, although all too often it is not perceived as such.

Is the Homo stimulus now the man of the future?

It looks as if the Homo stimulus will become the dominant form of man.

And if people were to resist?

This implies that the Homo stimulus basically has something bad about it. In fact, however, it is only a matter of further development and adaptation. Certainly there are many ways to limit the influence of the stimuli at the moment.

However, with each passing year, we will have to do without more and more conveniences and, in some cases, vital applications, just think of the coming breakthroughs in AI research or medicine.

But of course that would somehow work out, because after all, even in the middle of the 20th century, in certain constellations, perhaps as a farmer in the countryside, one could still largely escape industrialization.

But one should not forget that children and grandchildren grow up in the Age of Collective Individualism, i.e. in the midst of Behavioral Capitalism and the modern Stimulus Society, and will not know anything else.

The exciting question, however, will be a different one: What role will causality play in the future?

What do you mean?

Already today, many of the highly frequented stimuli are only partially coherent. For example, when dozens of messages are viewed or short videos are played that are forgotten only seconds later or are suppressed by new stimuli. Often only the analyzing algorithm knows the context, not the user.

Would it not be possible that causality is an overestimated component and that in a near future a part of humanity will simply, parts of the day, jump from stimulus to stimulus? And is completely satisfied? Of course, we can hardly imagine this today, and yet we must not keep our eyes closed for future developments.

One of the big questions of the future will therefore be that of causality. First a philosophical one and then a very real one.

This interview was published in several national and international media between January and February 2020, a

*more detailed list can be found in the official presence of
the Erich von Werner Society.*

Digression: What is Behavioral Capitalism?

- Human behavior is a usable resource
- This raw material has become a production factor due to technological progress
- This factor of production has led to new business models that are now having a massive impact on economic, political and social life.
- We can therefore speak of a new variety of capitalism: Behavioral Capitalism
- This new form of capitalism is not yet understood as such, which brings with it the danger that it creates power and market relations that can hardly or only with great difficulty be corrected later.

The world is experiencing a change of times and an era of change. Dynamic, fast and at what point is this more evident than in technological progress, which is changing personal and community life powerfully and at an incredible speed, leaving almost no field, be it politics,

society or economy, untouched. In the course of this process, relationships of influence have shifted and new ones have been established. But all of this almost imperceptibly, almost creepingly standing in the shadows and yet in the end almost touching everything. Technology means more than ever power and this special influence by the smart world, is today found in the Western hemisphere surprisingly bundled in a few companies, which naturally have little interest in making the risks of their activities too public, since they primarily see the opportunities rather than the dangers of their actions. Who can blame them? But how many people really understand their business models? Didn't they seem to come out of nowhere, these billion-dollar companies that are now indispensable?

This new influence of the large technology corporations, which often only exist for a few years, is just as amazing and surprising as the development that their products have become an indispensable part of the everyday life of many people and society at large. A silent conquest and yet it is much more than just clever business models that can be easily integrated into the existing system. These companies are just players on a playing field that

has made their existence and growth possible. One that has been underestimated and not recognized too often so far: that of Behavioral Capitalism.

With this term, the child itself was derived and baptized by the author of these lines, the feeling for the shifting of power relations gets an ordering, well-founded framework and becomes comprehensible. The accumulation of power can no longer hide behind the mechanisms of the new, but emerges clearly into the light. A necessity, because a boundless and unbridled Behavioral Capitalism is even more dangerous than an angry financial capitalism, because it needs not only capital but also the human being as a whole for harvesting. Always and anytime. Yes, the phenomenon was palpable. Now it finds its analysis and order. Behavioral Capitalism must therefore be identified and interpreted in order to be able to deal with it in a self-confident and positive way. The wild horse needs dressage, otherwise it will go through in the end.

Isolated, and this should be noted, there have already been further attempts to give the new era a verbalized form, of which Shoshana Zuboff's concept of surveillance capitalism in particular is worth mentioning, but this one

- and forgive me for saying this - is too brief to adequately describe the corresponding global changes and also focuses strongly on possible negative aspects of a rapid development, which can be both a blessing and a curse, the truth usually lies in the middle.

The model of Behavioral Capitalism therefore takes a different, neutral approach and has little more in common with surveillance capitalism than that both want to approach the same phenomenon. Nevertheless, it is recommended to deal with this preparation. However, since these pages are only intended to provide a brief description of Behavioral Capitalism, a deeper examination of other concepts can only be done separately.

Let us therefore start with the actual topic and immediately with a definition:

Behavioral Capitalism is a form of capitalism in which human behavior becomes the central factor in the production and provision of goods and services.

The key to understanding this new form of capitalism is to consider human behavior as a usable raw material. From this, as far as it can be obtained to a sufficient extent, it is possible to derive the needs of the people on the

one hand, but also forecasts for future action on the other. On the basis of this raw material, products and services can be produced that meet the needs and future behavior. It is also possible to trade the data itself on the market. How behavior is defined?

Behavior is understood to be both action, toleration and non-action. The processes can be conscious or unconscious. It is influenced and generated by stimuli.

All of this may sound terribly abstract, but on closer inspection, behavior has often been used as a raw material, although not always considered so. We do not want to refer to the selling of indulgences in the Middle Ages, but to the insurance industry. It is a prime example of how customer behavior, often in the person of the representative, is researched, then evaluated by the company and finally used to improve existing products, i.e. insurance, and create new services. Only in this way were creative developments such as securing one's own death conceivable. Since these are intangible, i.e. intangible goods, the behavior of the interested parties and customers is of paramount importance.

It has basically always been a factor of production, at least in these areas, and it is precisely with this thought that we are able to approach this new form of capitalism, because the recognition that the needs and behavior of potential customers is an important component in order to be able to offer and sell products and services effectively is neither original, nor does it require any more detailed explanation.

But now the conditions have changed, because technological development has led to new business models that have gained such influence that they raise the question whether an independent form of capitalism has not long since emerged from them: Behavioral Capitalism. This brings us to the central thesis of this paper, which is that new possibilities of behavioral skimming have turned raw materials into a factor of production and thus created a special kind of capitalism.

<p>The central production factor of Behavioral Capitalism is human behavior.</p>

Not that one did⁶⁰ not always want to know as much as possible, but it was only with the aforementioned technological development that the problem of the difficult acquisition of behavioral data disappeared into thin air within a very short time. It is therefore hardly surprising at what speed large technology corporations such as Amazon, Facebook or Google emerged and began to collect data, use behavior according to capitalist methods and embed people bit by bit. Algorithms and automation made possible what humans would not have been able to do at all.⁶¹

They created the great behavioral capitalists. Now they analyse the Homo stimulus and try to generate information or data based on his behavior or to offer or mediate products and services. Completely tailored to the individual. The raw material "behavior" became a production factor.

⁶⁰ The "man" here is a representative of interest representatives from, for example, business and politics.

⁶¹ Not even the most capable insurance agent, to stick to the example chosen, who maintains such intimate contacts with his customers, would ever have been able to do so.

This new factor of production is now so important that it has also become indispensable for traditional and financial capitalism, because knowledge of current behavior, composed of vast amounts of acquired data, makes it possible in many cases to estimate or influence future behavior.

Behavior today is also a central production factor for classical and financial capitalism, complementing labour, land and capital.

This behavior is then used directly as a commodity or further processed in a production process to produce satisfaction and/or forecast products.

A satisfaction product aims at satisfying human needs.

A prediction product predicts future human behavior.

Behavioral data can also be traded without further processing.

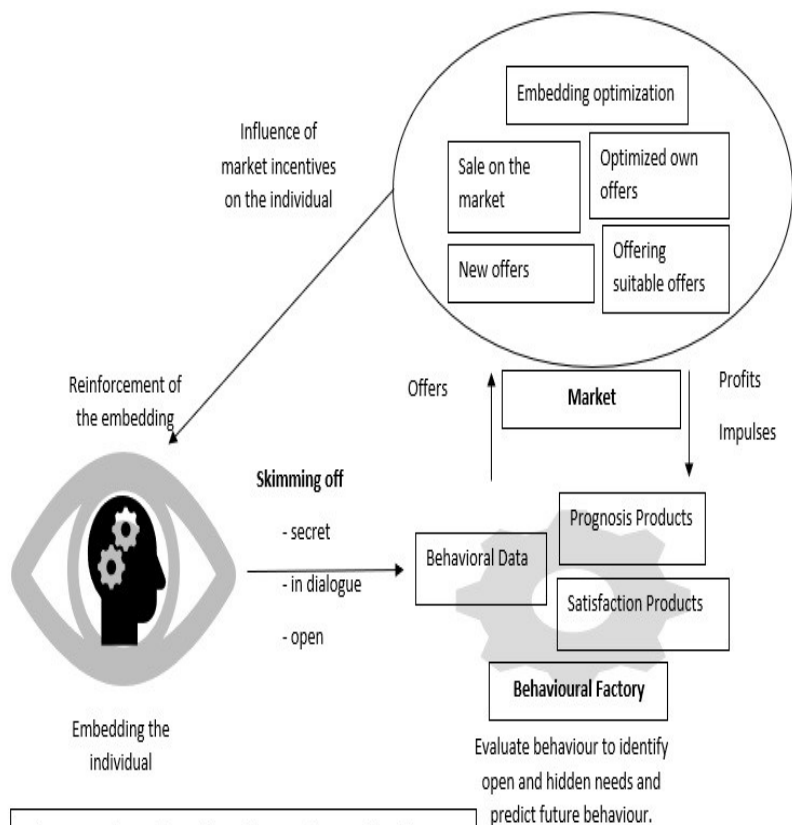
This task is normally performed by algorithms and, increasingly, by artificial intelligence. To simplify, we

summarize this decentralized process in the vivid metaphor of the behavior factory.

The storage of behavior, as well as the processing into satisfaction and prognosis products, takes place in the behavior factory.

So much for the basic definitions and the history of development. In the following, the functioning or the value-added process of Behavioral Capitalism will be examined in more detail.

The Cycle of Behavioral Capitalism



The Cycle of Behavioural Capitalism

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Absorption of behavioral data

Behavioral Capitalism is based on the raw material and production factor behavior, which is created by the individual's reaction to stimuli. This he must first win by skimming. Such experiments have always existed, but only technological progress driven by the changing times made automated harvesting in large quantities possible. The skimming process has three variants:

- **Open levy**

In this case, the individual is aware that his or her data is used to create certain appropriate forecasting and satisfaction products.

A typical example would be the input in a search engine. His personal behavior or interest is openly used to present him with the desired result. In just one minute, for example, 2017 can be done worldwide:

- 3.8 million Google search queries
- 47,000 Instagram photo uploads
- 4.1 million Youtube video clicks

- 530,000 Snapchat photo shares
- 456,000 Twitter message posting

These figures impressively demonstrate that many of the transmission of behavioral data is voluntary in many cases because it creates added value for the user.

- **Dialogical skimming**

In the dialogic absorption, the individual and a machine (algorithm, AI) enter into a dialogue process that serves to identify needs, but also to estimate future behavior. Both sides react to stimuli and it is now possible to reveal needs that the user may not have been aware of. The interaction can be open or hidden. What is important is that the process goes beyond an action.

- **Hidden levy**

In the case of covert skimming, the behavior is harvested and processed or resold without the knowledge of the user. An example would be when profile data of an individual in a social network is used to develop commercial products

and services to be used for behavioral manipulation or control. As a model case, the use of the 87 million Facebook user data from Cambridge Analytica for the election campaign of Donald Trump in 2017 could be mentioned here.

The boundaries between the individual variants are naturally fluid. For example, the majority of search engine users are now well aware that the results are accompanied by product advertisements on the same topic spectrum, among others. Similarly, users of social media are likely to be aware that their data is used for embedding. A rigid separation of the types of levy therefore makes little sense.

Transformation in the behavior factory

The data volumes obtained are now stored in the behavior factory, a metaphor for representing a complicated and decentralized manufacturing process more vividly, and are processed in parts into products. Thereby prognosis products as well as satisfaction products are produced.

Forecasting products are used to estimate the future behavior of an individual. A typical example would be a user of a social network who is interested in hiking, presents corresponding photos and documents participation in corresponding events. The algorithm can now read this data and supplement it with other information such as age, place of residence, brand preferences, style, etc. Coupled with the readout of the browser history, which can happen even if one is no longer logged into the corresponding network, a forecast product is created, the result of which could be, for example, that exactly this user will most likely set off on corresponding tours again in summer. It would therefore make sense to virtually confront him shortly before with suitable services (e.g. travel offers) or products (e.g. hiking boots). The forecast product opens the door for a targeted approach.

Satisfaction products, on the other hand, are aimed quite specifically at satisfying identified needs. Not in the future, but promptly in the present. It is interesting to note that a satisfaction product can refer both to a need that the user is aware of and one that he has not yet reflected, but which emerges from the analysis of behavior. Thus, especially satisfaction products, but also prognosis

products have also the function of revealing the inner needs of the individual and can therefore be an important element of self-realization.

Trading on the market

Both prognosis and satisfaction products as well as the behavior itself can be used or sold by the data collector himself. Massive profits are generated here, which are usually reinvested. Not necessarily only into the existing business model, but also into other fields that invite networking. The following possibilities therefore arise for the market:

- **Offering suitable offers**

The data is used to provide the individual with suitable offers. This can consist of own services and products, combined, but these are usually combined with advertising for third parties. This is still the core of the business model today.

Overall, it is estimated that 25% of global advertising revenues are now generated by Facebook and Google, two of the prime examples of

applied Behavioral Capitalism. In 2016 the figure was still 20%. And rising.

- **New offers**

This behavior makes it necessary to design completely new products to satisfy the needs identified. The idea of deriving necessary innovations and further developments from market observation is as old as business itself, but thanks to the new skimming possibilities of a raw material that was previously difficult to extract, it has taken it to a completely new dimension.

- **Optimization of own offers**

The own offers are improved and adapted by behavioral products and corresponding feedback. This applies both to the collectors of the data and to their customers. The learning machine in particular is dependent on these reactions in order to constantly improve its functions.

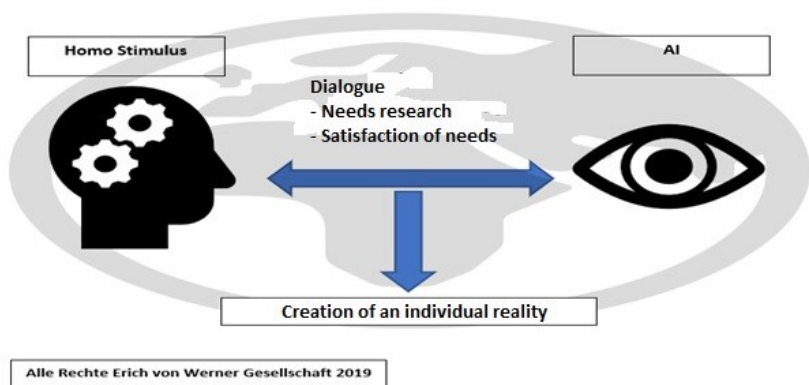
- **market sale**

The data volumes are made available to third parties raw or already as processed products for their own business activities.

- **Embedding optimization**

Collective Individualism knows the embedding of the human being the creation of an individual reality. Behavioral Capitalism contributes to this through a continuous cycle of behavioral skimming.

Embedding process



Stimulation of the individual to react

Ideally, the individual reacts to the stimuli offered and thus creates new behavior, which in turn can be skimmed off. This creates a cycle of embedding, which can ultimately lead to the creation of an individual reality.

In a complete Collective Individualism, which of course presupposes constant technical development, the exhausted would now gradually sink into an individualized reality. However, due to existing milieu conflicts, this is still incomplete. Parallel to this, the raw material behavior and investment capital accumulate, which constantly improves the possibilities of the behavior factory and skimming. A cycle is created. The game, driven by the machine, constantly starts over again. Thus, on the one hand, it conditions the embedding of the human being, but at the same time it also causes the social milieus to drift further apart.

Stocktaking and outlook

Behavioral Capitalism is a variety of capitalism which, like financial capitalism, is difficult to identify in its effects and therefore plays only a subordinate role in public perception and on the political agenda. He skillfully uses this to spread and consolidate, which under capitalism is often characterised by the emergence of monopolies or oligopolies. The real situation of the technology groups and their market power is impressive proof of this.

Behavioral Capitalism has therefore become firmly established, but without being perceived as such. State-of-the-art technology enables an embedding never seen before, which can penetrate into the most intimate areas of the individual. A development that requires closer examination and must not continue to take place in the shadows, because an unleashed Behavioral Capitalism would be an even stronger force than financial capitalism ever was. It would be a means of domination.

This development was deliberately presented in a neutral manner, as it entails both opportunities and risks. The embedding of the individual in his or her own world,

which serves the fulfilment of his or her own needs and self-realisation, is not negative at first, especially since this does not have to be designed in a closed-off way. On the other hand, of course, it plays a central role who ultimately controls the stimuli as well as the data and whether the behavior or even one's own reality is manipulated. This, like the model of Behavioral Capitalism, is now to be released for discussion.

This document is available under DOI 10.13140/RG.2.2.18058.62402 and has been published and released for discussion in the same form several times in German and English.

Alternative: o First Foundations of Behavioral Capitalism: A New Variety of Capitalism Gains Power and Influence", Andreas Herteux, Erich von Werner Verlag, 2019, ISBN 978-3981900675, DOI 10.5281/zenodo.3469568

Digression: The Age of Collective Individualism

A new epoch begins. How Behavioral Capitalism and the Stimulus Society created the Homo stimulus and ushered in a new age

In the history of mankind there have been numerous turning points and entries into new epochs and ages. Often the transitions were gradual, were not perceived as such, and were only recognized as a new era in retrospect.

This is exactly what is happening again at the moment. We are about to enter a new age: that of Collective Individualism.

But what is this Collective Individualism?

Key element Behavioral Capitalism⁶²

A key element in understanding this dawning era is Behavioral Capitalism, the new form of free enterprise that has turned human behavior into a factor of production.

Key element modern Stimulus Society

It makes little sense, however, to deal only with Behavioral Capitalism, because it stands in a context and is only one part of the new era. The mechanisms of Behavioral Capitalism are a product of technological progress, but can only develop their full effect through the development of the (modern) Stimulus Society. So another new term? It is easy to explain. The Stimulus Society is defined as follows:

⁶² Please refer to the excursus on the corresponding topic in this paper or to the corresponding monograph.

A (modern) Stimulus Society is generally understood to be an association of individuals who are exposed to stimuli that influence their behavior in a high frequency, usually artificially generated, and who have difficulty or difficulty in escaping them, or sometimes even do not want to.

What may sound complicated at first glance simply describes a social development since the end of the Second World War, which is increasingly confronted with stimuli, by which one understands a stimulus that triggers or changes behavior by acting on a sensory organ.

Put simply, a person who lived in the USA or West Germany in the 1950s was exposed to far fewer stimuli from the fields of entertainment, politics, business or simply advertising than a person in the 21st century. What was there then? The paper? They could be put away. Turn off the radio. The TV? Was not yet established and at best offered a program on a few channels by the hour at best. Films were seen in the cinemas and they were usually edited slowly and not too hectically. Advertising on the streets? Well, she kept within limits and there was hardly

any harassment at home. We don't even want to talk about politics.

This was to change fundamentally in the following decades. The influence of stimuli increased, whereby the development of new marketing concepts, which were linked to scientific concepts such as behaviorism, naturally played a central role. They have all applied: the economy, society and politics.

A symbiotic development

But it would be too easy to speak of a simple stimulus bombing, because people got used to the stimuli extraordinarily fast and demanded them. Television prevailed. The brave new world of consumption and advertising - nobody had to break down the gates, because they were opened with joy.⁶³

⁶³ Of course, the competitor models of the West have always known methods of stimulation. However, it took a change of times to be able to speak of a modern stimulating society in her case as well. An example of this is the case of China. Mentality, system and philosophy may differ, but even here one can speak of a modern stimulating society, without which, for example, the introduction of a social credit system would be unthinkable. The mechanisms remain comparable.

It was a mutually fertilizing symbiosis and by no means a pure manipulation. The supply would not have had such success without demand, although it can also be argued that from then on the stimuli would have been effective from birth and another life would have been difficult to imagine. At this point, however, it is debatable.

Whatever conclusion one may come to in the end, it remains a truth that the Stimulus Society developed and intensified.

Today, for many people, the stimuli are always present in everyday life, whether in the surroundings or just on the display of the smartphone, and some of them are even desired. Even the most abstinent would probably have their difficulties with the silence of the 1950s, because they have long since adapted. Perhaps not yet to the modern Stimulus Society, which was only finally heralded by a leap in development, the change of times, and caused a corresponding evolutionary thrust, but nevertheless to changed framework conditions, which almost naturally belong to a continuous development, which is to be distinguished from the above-mentioned "leap".

The Homo stimulus

We call this new person Homo stimulus, the stimulus person. To know and understand him is another key to understanding a new time.

Without this Homo stimulus, Behavioral Capitalism would not work, just think how our 50s man would feel and behave in a world with so many stimuli, although Stimulus Society and Behavioral Capitalism are influential and partly conditional developments.

Collective Individualism

In combination, the change of times and these two processes have initiated the Age of Collective Individualism⁶⁴. But how is this defined?

Collective Individualism is understood to be an individualism in which the individual is embedded in such a way that individual self-development can take place within a framework that is not or hardly visible.

⁶⁴ At this point, of course, additional reference should be made to other environmental factors and the disposition of the individual, which have their importance but are negligible for the overall theory.

This also sounds much more complicated than it is. Let us think of the cycle of Behavioral Capitalism, which skims the behavior of the Homo stimulus and thus tries to find out his needs, to satisfy them and to forecast for the future. The Homo stimulus is thus embedded piece by piece in its own individualized world.

Let us take up the popular example of the person who lives in a rented flat in any city and has no social contacts apart from his work. He uses new technologies to access search engines and social media from home. Suppose he's interested in skiing. He researches for it and more and more suggests in the algorithms friends, groups, products and news around this topic. The Homo stimulus set a stimulus for the machine and the machine returned multiple ones after analyzing it. He clicks on them, gets to know like-minded people, gets the necessary equipment and a little later, for the first time, he also skis in reality. We know these and similar stories.

Embedding of the individual

Every click and every reaction animates the algorithm to run further relevant articles. The homines respond in a

stimulating way and everything becomes deeper and deeper. A whirlpool and a cycle are created. The Homo stimulus is embedded, dives, in our example, into the world of skiing and is happy and satisfied with it. He lives in the Age of Collective Individualism, in which the needs of the individual are determined individually by behavioral skimming and stimulation, and, according to collective rules, which the individual, however, does not or hardly notice, are satisfied. The Stimulus Society and Behavioral Capitalism have made it possible.

With this sentence, the apparent contradiction in the concept of Collective Individualism also dissolves. Yes, it is about maximum fulfilment of the individual's needs. Yes, perhaps even a unique world is created in which the individual is the king and yet all this happens according to rules and in the same way for everyone. The borders blur and are no longer seen.

The signs of Collective Individualism can therefore already be seen, although we are certainly only at the beginning of a development.

A new epoch has begun

But where could all this lead? That's easy to answer. The Age of Collective Individualism should culminate in total individualization, if development is not hindered by milieu struggles and distributional issues. However, these two factors will continue to play a major role and postpone total individualization to some point in the future. However, this does not change anything at the epochal transition, and it would be a big mistake now to regard the process of embedding as either complete or "non-existent". That would be thinking in extremes. It is quite possible to lead several lives at the same time. Hybrid lives, where many needs are satisfied in the embedding, and a life outside will go hand in hand. How many people do you know who go to work on a regular basis and the rest of their lives are determined by the embedding through the smartphone? That can't happen to them? Maybe, but epochs are somewhat longer and the next birth cohort will not know anything else. For the time being, however, it may be true that some milieus immerse themselves more deeply, some less, but no one can completely escape the new technologies. And of

course, the disposition or the personality always plays its role, even if unexplored.

Positive and negative sides

Another fatal mistake would be to regard the embedding as exclusively socially isolating. While it is quite possible that the importance of people will diminish as many needs can also be satisfied by machines, on the one hand this would not be perceived in this way and on the other hand embedding can also help to bring together people with similar interests who would otherwise never have found each other.

We will therefore not experience pure Collective Individualism in our lifetime, but what theoretical construct existed in reality in its pure form? Reality is, to put it a little bit - and very freely interpreted - with Plato, always a fuzzy copy of the ideal. Therefore, as long as human needs cannot yet be fully met within the personal embedding, an incomplete Collective Individualism can be assumed.

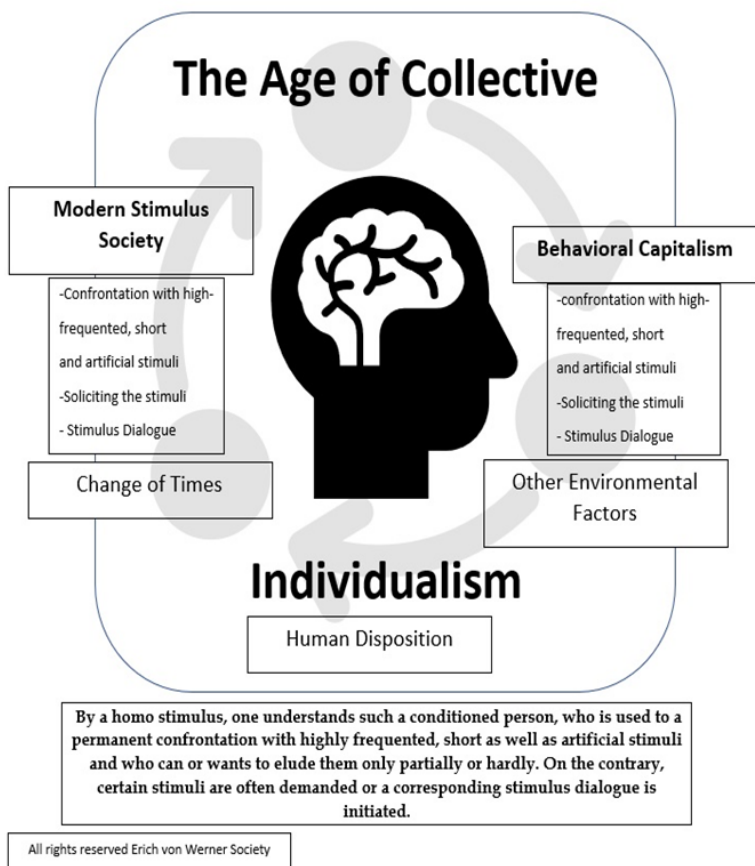
A complete embedding can only be successful if all needs within it can be met. This cannot happen as long as there are still **milieu struggles**, because they inhibit total individualization. Even if these were ended, it remains questionable whether all people will experience a (global) perfect Collective Individualism, because it would presuppose the ending of distribution problems.

However, mankind will be able to avoid an imperfect one in the future always few and probably sometime, due to the progressive technological development, will not want to avoid it any more.

One more reason to talk extensively about Collective Individualism and its components, Behavioral Capitalism and the Stimulus Society. The new age has already begun. It is up to us to design this too.

Prospects for the future

The Creation of the Homo stimulus



The theory of Homo stimulus involves the adaptation and development of the human being to a new age: that of Collective Individualism.

At this point it should not matter whether we are talking only about conditioning or evolutionary development, because it is irrelevant. In fact, it is a far-reaching change that can vary human behavior and therefore the future itself.

How man will deal with this development is ultimately up to him alone. The history of the genus "Homo" is full of such processes and it is no different with the "evolution" to the modern stimulus man.

This concrete process of adaptation should not be the point, but rather a fundamental, almost philosophical thought, which so far is still a small snow flurry, but which will become an unstoppable avalanche in a few decades.

The central question to be raised on the last pages of this monograph is that of causality, because in the final analysis it unites many more themes than might appear at first glance. But let us start from the beginning.

Life appears causal. Cause, effect, sequence. Birth, adolescence, ageing, dying. The logic seems to confirm the existence of the link. In fact, for a long time it was, for a large part of humanity, unimaginable that there can be a renunciation of causality in human life.

But, is human life possible in whole or in part without the famous red thread? The reader of these lines may spontaneously deny this, and yet sooner or later, assuming a corresponding lifetime, he will have to deal with it, because it seems that this question could become a central one of the 21st century. But a waiver of causality? Can you imagine that?

In philosophy, it was. However, courage and abstraction is easier to find in thoughts than in reality.⁶⁵ However, at some point, parts of the natural sciences followed, one thinks of quantum physics, but isn't all this just an insignificant niche for life? Uncoupled from a world in which B simply presupposes A?

⁶⁵ The author of these lines has also tried his hand at this ancient science:

Grundlagen der Weltenphilosophie. Franzius Verlag, 20.07.2015, ISBN-13: 978-3945509029

For others, however, this idea became more and more shaky with the beginning of the change of times, the increasingly perceptible embedding of the human being and the Age of Collective Individualism that began with it. It became conceivable that man could abandon the red thread, or parts of it, in favour of a permanent individualised world, which a before and after does not necessarily need. The more perfect the Collective Individualism, the less need there is for connections, since the focus will always be on the momentary satisfaction of needs. The stimuli come and go. Over and over again. No need for a past, none for the future. If necessary, memories can perhaps even be artificially created at some point,⁶⁶ but it

⁶⁶ Whether memories cannot be fundamentally mistrusted is another matter. We are familiar with the phenomenon of witness statements in traffic accidents, where there are often different interpretations of an allegedly objective reality and similar cases. Memory often deceives, is adapted and can be influenced. Only very few memories are stored in a safe, which is usually sealed with the tape of serious experiences. But we are explicitly not talking about this kind of memory, which is even speculated to change the DNA of humans and then be indirectly passed on.

is rather unlikely that the satisfaction of the moment still requires such glances, even if not excluded.

At this point, of course, it must be pointed out that one extreme is described, knowing full well that reality will consist of mixed forms of preserving and abandoning contexts.

And yet the idea remains astonishingly logical, even if it will understandably meet with rejection from some readers, but why does a completely embedded person, whose every wish is virtually read from his eyes, need a red thread? Why would he still want to remember beautiful experiences from the past? There would be no terrible thing if he had already spent his life in the frame. And he doesn't have to worry about anything. All this is done by algorithms and artificial intelligence. And wouldn't everybody be happy with that? The idea that causality is lost in part in a perfect Collective Individualism in the end is thus by no means absurd, but even likely.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ At this point, one may critically note that the act of satisfying a need is a causal process, but it is the individual's view and

Let us take an example which, and it is regrettable, many people can understand:

That of a dementia patient in an advanced stage of the disease who forgets events, decisions and people within minutes. Such a person knows causality only to a limited extent; perhaps not at all. At some point, he'll probably go completely off the grid. For observers this is a terrible state, for the sick person it is probably when he or she is consciously aware of the change. But what else does he perceive? What is happiness beyond the red thread? Are these then only individual moments that pass immediately? We do not know, of course, and some neuroscientists could raise some objections here, based on proven changes within the brain, but it cannot be denied that life also shows variants without causality, even though they may seem terrible to us.

Now we look at the mechanisms of Behavioral Capitalism, the embedding, the modern Stimulus Society and the Homo stimulus and a similar principle emerges:

not the external observation of this process that must be taken into account.

How many of the activating stimuli that caused a reaction for a brief moment are forgotten after only a few seconds? Does it matter whether this - for the individual - is connected in any way? Isn't it enough that the short video was entertaining for a minute, the text message briefly demanded attention? In this way, are not hundreds, perhaps thousands of⁶⁸ social interactions devoid of any causality?⁶⁹ Undoubtedly, there may always have been meaningless and unrememberable distractions, but in this form and intensity?

Now, the Homo stimulus should by no means be compared with a dementia sufferer, because the stimulus person is ultimately only an adaptation and further development and does not carry a potential renunciation of correlations in itself, but it would ultimately result from the interaction with the environment and the personal disposition. The sufferer, on the other hand, is a pitiable individual who gradually loses control and ultimately

⁶⁸ At this point, reference should be made to the previous chapters in this monograph, which provide more detailed data.

⁶⁹ Mind you, for the individual. The fact that the algorithm acts "causally" remains undisputed.

loses himself. It is not possible for him, according to the current state of medical development, to defend himself against what is coming, while Homo stimulus can actively shape.

But to be able to act, knowledge is also required. The change of times, the Stimulus Society, Behavioral Capitalism, the era of Collective Individualism - the signs are visible, they only need to be interpreted and controlled, because they cannot be stopped. Large parts of the people are already opening up to the new time and even welcome it. Likewise, for each new generation everything will be a little more understandable than for the previous one. And in the end, causality is also at stake. And isn't there a threat of an unprecedented loss of control over many areas of life without connection? Or is that acceptable for a perhaps better future?

A bold thesis? Or just an inconvenient truth? Of course objections can be found. The most obvious one may be mentioned: Collective Individualism cannot be perfect as long as there are still milieu struggles and there is no end in sight, because the world will never be able to solve the distributional issues - from today's perspective - and the

change of times brings with it a lot of unresolved problems and conflicts.

This objection is correct and the struggle between the phenomenon of milieu struggle and individual collectivism will occupy us as humanity for the whole century to come, but we should not think in extremes at this point, because there is not only a choice between total and abandoned causality, but so much in between. That is where the reality of the future will lie. There, in an imperfect Collective Individualism with its manifold intermediate and partial solutions in which causality sometimes remains significant and then becomes increasingly blurred.

Nevertheless, the question will become an important one for the next century. It therefore makes sense to ask them already today.

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