

National Research University
HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

As a manuscript

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**THE CONCEPT OF MULTITUDE IN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY: FROM
MACHIAVELLI TO NEGRI AND VIRNO**

Dissertation summary

for the purpose of obtaining academic degree

Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy

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History and Methods of Sociology

Moscow – 2021

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Relevance of the Study

The turbulent political processes unfolding all over the world today — from Western Europe and Russia, from the United States and Latin America to the Middle and Far East — in which social classes, groups, and masses of the population are increasingly involved, raise the question of the relationship between the individual and the surrounding socio-political reality. They also raise the question about the essence of the subject forming this reality in a completely new way compared to just a few decades ago. In light of these trends, some well-established concepts of political philosophy change their former theoretical meaning. Among them are concepts of *the masses* and *the multitude*.

The problem of the masses — the people, the crowd, the mass man — concerned many social and political philosophers, psychologists, sociologists, the fact that in the 19th and 20th centuries resulted in a huge variety of concepts. These theorists analyzed the phenomenon of the masses from very different, sometimes diametrically opposed positions, trying to reveal its essence and understand how it operates in the political space. But at the end of the 20th century, and especially at the turn of the 20th-21st centuries, the situation has changed. Against the backdrop of the crisis that befell all basic forms of socio-political organization in the Late Modern period, the concept of multitude has increasingly come to the fore in discourses of political philosophy, consistently replacing the concept of the masses. Since transformations of this kind unfold in the context of a crisis, it is natural that in its development the problem of multitude has acquired a critical orientation, having received initial coverage within the framework of non-canonical Marxist discourse, namely in the works of such famous Italian political theorists as Paolo Virno and Antonio Negri, whose research has been followed by a number of like-minded authors.

The search for a new subject of political action is connected with the need to reexamine the previous tradition of political thinking and to find a suitable concept

that could perfectly fit the idea of political subject in the new circumstances. The previously dominant concept of *the masses* was presented as that which no longer met modern social conditions. The multitude, according to Negri, is not equivalent to the masses. The masses are homogeneous and do not reflect social differences. If the problem of the masses, mass person and the people is ultimately reduced to the idea of a passive mechanism that sets the movement of people in the political space, then the multitude is endowed with a subjective content and acts as an active principle capable of diverse socio-political activities, be it protests, social movements, discussions, debates, all kinds of performances, up to acts of “direct action”. Such an interpretation of *the multitude* implies the deconstruction of the line in the socio-philosophical and theoretical-political thinking that appeals to the transcendent principles in the tradition of Hobbes — Rousseau — Hegel and beyond. It simultaneously contributes to the revival of interest in the theories of immanent order that developed the concept of the multitude, in particular to the corresponding section of Spinoza's teaching.

The contemporary doctrine of the multitude is created in opposition to the concept of people, on the one hand, and to the concept of the masses, on the other. At the same time, the multitude arises the moment revolutionary-minded thinkers consider the situation of the working class: this is the assemblage point of the radical subject. There has certainly been no “revolution” of the multitude, but the idea, or better, hope, lies in the potential hidden forces that arise in modern society, and which have not yet found a suitable description. Therefore, the multitude is initially thought of as a political subject and it is also a project that should reveal itself in the future.

However, the authors describing the problem of the multitude in the optics of constructing a special political subjectivity, in our opinion, face a number of difficulties. First, their perspective is dominated by the logic of the class approach, following which the multitude should be considered either as a kind of proletariat of the industrial era, or as a kind of a “new dangerous class” (Guy Standing),

which from time to time comes out from the historical underground. Secondly, such optics predetermines the need to choose only one option from the alternative “the multitude — the people (the masses)”, namely, the variant of the multitude is considered to be as the only adequate political subject, as well as the method of conceptualization corresponding to such an approach.

The problem of the multitude today requires a broader view than the one implemented in latest theoretical developments. In this regard, there is a need to go beyond a simple statement of the problem and give a reasoned, theoretically justified answer to the question, why, instead of the theory of the masses with its already significant philosophical tradition, researchers are going back today, making attempts to re-pose the problem of the multitude? After all, today it is necessary to give philosophical clarity to the question of history and development of the multitude as a political doctrine.

Thus, we can conclude that, when modern political theory is experiencing a crisis, it makes sense to return to historical crossroads, to the point where the concept of the multitude itself gave rise to all the later theoretical modifications and more specific socio-political concepts. This point is marked by the names of Spinoza and Hobbes, the authors whose political doctrines formed our current vision of political reality, including the nature of the relationship between the individual and the state as the ultimate embodiment of the social whole. Taking into account their influence on modern strategies and approaches to solving this problem, the idea is to begin a historical and philosophical study of the multitude with the intention to consistently conduct it through subsequent historical stages up to the present day.

The Extent of Prior Investigation of the Topic

It should be noted that there is little interest in the problem of the multitude among Russian-speaking academia engaged in political and philosophical research. Meanwhile, in foreign literature, the topic of the multitude is very actively addressed, especially after the release of Hardt and Negri's key work *Empire*,

where for the first time this concept is placed at the center of political analysis and conceptualized as a force that resists the Empire's global order. In addition to this study, we turn to various authors who tried to clarify the problems of the multitude critically analyzing main theses of these authors. A large study of the philosophical heritage of Negri and Hardt is undertaken by Elia Zaru¹, where the current status of the main topics raised in *Empire* is analyzed, including the questions such as: What is the multitude at the most basic level? and How does this concept correlate with the Marxist theoretical context of our time? Kam Shapiro², Vittorio Morfino³ and Michel Goddard⁴ give a detailed analysis of how *multitude* emerged as a concept, focusing on how the Negrian interpretation of Spinoza contributes to this theory. These works are essential if we want to conduct an adequate reconstruction of the concept's history.

Harrison⁵, Tampio⁶, and Moreiras⁷ provide a critical analysis of the doctrine of the multitude. They try to answer the question why the multitude can be perceived as a political subject and how it can manifest itself in political reality. Mazzarella⁸ is one of the few authors who dwells upon the relationship between the concepts *multitude* and *the masses* in the historical context: the latter is a popular concept of social philosophy, especially in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In addition, Mazzarella compares these two concepts in his article, which allows not only to draw research parallels, but also to focus on the differences between the two concepts of social and political philosophy.

The question of the political nature of the multitude in Russian academic context has been studied much less, but it is possible to highlight several authors

1 Zaru 2019.

2 Shapiro 2003.

3 Morfino 2014.

4 Goddard 2011.

5 Harrison 2014.

6 Tampio N. 2009.

7 Moreiras 2010.

8 Mazzarella 2010.

who addressed this problem, among them Nina Sosna⁹, who studied the problems of the multitude within the media sphere; Boris Kagarlitsky¹⁰, who criticizes the project of the multitude and the *Empire* itself; Alexei Penzin¹¹ and Vladislav Inozemtsev¹², who give valuable comments and clarifications about many key problems of the modern doctrine of the multitude.

Regarding the doctrine of the multitude in classical political theory, it is impossible not to mention the work of Machiavelli, who set the foundations for understanding the multitude within the discourse of control and organization of the chaotic matter in political reality. There is a huge number of studies devoted to Machiavelli's political theory, but it is worth highlighting only those which deal with the Florentine philosopher's treatment of the multitude, most importantly the works of Lucchese¹³, Morfino¹⁴ and Gilbert¹⁵.

Morfino, in particular, conducts a detailed analysis of connections between Machiavelli and Spinoza in his *The Spinoza-Machiavelli encounter*¹⁶. Morfino contrasts the two classical thinkers with Hobbes, showing two major different lines of political philosophy. In addition, a great contribution to the history of the multitude (regarding Spinoza's views) is a collection compiled by Caporali, Morfino and Visentin called *Spinoza: Individuo e Moltitudine*¹⁷, which contains many significant works written by Italian researchers, including Negri himself. Here the relevance of Spinozism is demonstrated through the analysis of the concept of power, state, affect, etc.

The classical doctrine of the multitude in its original version is not an object of great interest for Virno, Hardt and Negri – who for the first time outline the

9 Sosna 2013.

10 Kagarlitsky 2004.

11 Penzin 2004.

12 Inozemtsev 2006.

13 Lucchese 2015.

14 Morfino 2019.

15 Gilbert 1984.

16 Morfino 2019.

17 Spinoza: Individuo e moltitudine, a cura di R. Caporali, V. Morfino, S. Visentin. Societa editrice "Il Ponte Vecchio".

return of the multitude to political philosophy. Virno in his *Grammar*¹⁸ points out that Hobbes and Spinoza are “founding fathers” of modern multitude theory, but he takes only a few pages to elaborate. He tries to demonstrate the radical opposition between Hobbes and Spinoza. Negri does the same in his text *Subversive Spinoza*¹⁹, but, unlike Virno, he pays great attention to Spinoza's philosophy. He develops a materialistic interpretation of Spinoza, where he presents his vision of the political problem of the multitude. Hobbes serves as a negative example of antagonism towards multitude political theory, as his political philosophy is based on the concept of power as a transcendent principle.

Thus, in the works of Negri, Hardt and Virno, the problem of the classical multitude doctrine remains far from fully solved, and philosophical and political views of Hobbes and Spinoza are presented as two pure oppositions. However, considering the discussions of the 17th century from a modern point of view, it becomes obvious that the political problem of the multitude requires a different, more multilateral and versatile approach.

In order to resolve this theoretical difficulty, it is necessary to analyze more carefully how the concept of the multitude functions in political-philosophical vocabulary of the 16th and 17th centuries. There are a number of serious studies in this area. An excellent study on the concept of multitude in Hobbes`s political language was conducted by Mikko Jakonen, a Finnish researcher, author of the monograph *Multitude in Motion: Re-Readings on the Political Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes*²⁰. Jakonen carefully reconstructs Hobbes`s concept of multitude with his entire political philosophy in view. Jakonen interprets the problem of the multitude through concepts of matter, form, and movement, which allows us to take a step towards a non-subjective approach in political theory.

18 Virno 2013.

19 Negri 2004.

20 Jakonen 2013.

Balibar very carefully traces the problem of the fear of masses in Spinoza's philosophy. The concepts of the masses and multitude are synonymous for him, he does not make a serious distinction between them, as Hardt and Negri do, thereby showing that these concepts relate to the same topic. The problem of the multitude within the framework of classical political philosophy of Hobbes and Spinoza is also raised by other authors whose works we have addressed in our study: Field²¹, Armstrong²², Magun²³, Malcolm²⁴, Maferon²⁵, Tucker²⁶, Bull²⁷, Astorga²⁸ and Cristofolini²⁹.

Along with the reconstruction of the classical doctrine of the multitude, it became necessary to turn to the analysis of the phenomena of the masses and the mass man. This is due to the fact that, firstly, the concepts of the multitude and the masses are often analyzed as synonymous. It should be noted that such non-distinction is characteristic of the Russian-language version of *Empire*, where the term *multitude* is constantly translated as “the masses”. However, the translator himself is aware of this fact: he refers to the tradition of translations in political philosophy and indicates that, in his opinion, the term “masses” looks more conventional here. Nevertheless, the ambiguity in the use of these terms requires analysis and comparison. Secondly, from a historical and philosophical point of view, the idea of the masses entered the vocabulary of social theory later than the concept of *multitudo*, and therefore it is logical to assume that the concept of the masses was formed in other socio-political realities, being designed to provide answers to other political challenges.

21 Field 2012.

22 Armstrong 2009.

23 Марун 2011.

24 Malcolm 2008.

25 Matheron 1997.

26 Tucker 2015.

27 Bull 2005.

28 Astorga 2011.

29 Cristofolini 2007.

Jodi Dean³⁰ offers her own version of how the logic of the political subject developed, contrasting the masses and the multitude. The multitude, in her view, is devoid of force as a collectivity, since it is composed of autonomous singularities. Addressing the crowd theorists, she explores the problems of collectivity as a separate force that operates in political reality. Using the example of her work, it can be observed that the masses and the multitude can be confronted as two alternative political projects for describing political reality. Therefore, a detailed description of how these two political logics operate is required, and whether they really differ. The study of the history of the concept requires a careful comparison of the two notions in order to answer the question of how they relate to each other: is the masses theory a continuation of the political logic of the multitude? Turning to works where the concept of the masses and mass man is elaborated, we sought to reconstruct the understanding of the masses based on latest achievements in political theory, giving an answer to a number of questions: What do the masses represent at the basic socio-political level? What does the masses' emergence in history mean? What is their role in the context of modern political reality? Therefore, in addition to all the theorists listed above, our research includes analysis and critical comparison of works by such authors as Ortega y Gasset, Le Bon, Tarde, Canetti, Baudrillard and others.

Object and Subject-matter of the Study

The object of this research is principal political and philosophical theories that explore the problems of the multitude. *The subject-matter* of this study is various interpretations of concepts *the multitude* and *the masses* in latest discourses of political philosophy, including corresponding excursions of the historical and philosophical order.

Study Tasks and Objective

³⁰ Dean 2016.

The objective of the study is to historically and theoretically reconstruct the concept of the multitude in various political-philosophical discourses. To do this, it is necessary to identify and analyze established approaches that define the essence of the concept of multitude, and to re-evaluate most authoritative philosophical interpretations of this concept. Only such a paradigm of research, combining history and contemporary theories, is able to answer questions that arise in this regard: Why has the concept of multitude been reactualized in modern political philosophy and How does this concept function in political-philosophical vocabulary today?

To achieve this objective, it is necessary to complete the following tasks:

1) Study Machiavelli's, Hobbes' and Spinoza's political philosophy, where the very concept of multitude was formed. Thus, we can explore key features of the multitude theory within the framework provided by the 16th and 17th century political philosophy.

2) Compare the concepts *multitude* and *the masses* in Modern political philosophy and explore possible relations and contradictions between these two categories.

3) Carry out a historical and political analysis of the main concepts of contemporary theory based on the theory of the multitude, defining the initial historical and philosophical prerequisites for such an interpretation of political reality.

4) Taking into account the multi-sided and more versatile approach developed in this way, critically rethink the concept of the multitude as it appears in recent literature and conceptualize different political approaches towards the problem of the multitude.

The Methodological and Theoretical Framework of the Study

One of the main methodological prerequisites of the study is the historical-genetic method, which allows us to determine the content and status of concepts in

the light of various philosophical frameworks. This makes it possible to grasp the political logic of the multitude, as well as to identify various doctrines within which the corresponding political and philosophical model is built. The comparative method will allow us to analyze the transformation of various doctrines of the multitude and to demonstrate the heterogeneity of these doctrines. Methodological difficulties of the study arise due to the fact that it is unclear how *the multitude* and *the masses*, or *crowd*, differ conceptually. The method of conceptualization will help us to understand the meaning of these concepts and systematize them as various political logics. In order to achieve the goals originally set in our dissertation research, it is assumed that the entire complex of the above methods and approaches will be used synchronously, which, in our opinion, will make it possible to give both the research process itself and the material presented clarity and consistency. The task of political philosophy is to clarify the complexity of political reality in its current, actual state, to help a person navigate it.

Scientific novelty of the Study

The scientific novelty of the dissertation research consists in the following:

1. The dissertation presents the experience of interpreting the concept of multitude in modern political philosophy, implemented through reconstruction of the original doctrine that developed within the framework of classical philosophy, namely in philosophical and political theories of Hobbes, Spinoza, and Machiavelli. It is shown that the concept of the multitude, put forward by them as a basic political concept correlated with the concept of the people, implies a more complex correlation between the two concepts than direct opposition and antagonism.

2. The theoretical significance of the concepts of the masses and mass society, which in the 19th and 20th centuries became the main transfer link between the classical (directly inheriting Hobbes and Spinoza) and the recent (developed in the last two decades) doctrines of political philosophy using the concept of multitude, is revealed. It has been demonstrated that *the masses* is a reinterpretation of *the multitude* in line with approaches by Hobbes, Spinoza and Machiavelli.

3. Within the framework of political philosophy, classical and contemporary approaches to the problem of multitude and its conceptual design are analyzed as two different versions of the interpretation of political reality, which ultimately allows us to assess the multitude not as a threat to social stability, but as an objective factor that takes a specific form in different historical conditions and each time requires an updated creative understanding.

4. Based on the concept of immaterial labor put forward by non-classical Marxism, the conceptualization of the multitude as a republic of friends, based on the problem of the commons, is presented. As a result, it has been possible to distinguish two large approaches to the conceptualization of the multitude. One approach represents it as a chaotic matter of political reality that needs control and organization. Another one, connected with Negri, Hardt and Virno, illustrates the possibility of describing the multitude as a political community of friends, in which matter is replaced by the possibility of subjectification of an infinite number of identities united in a common political space.

Statements to be Defended

1. The contemporary political doctrine of the multitude cannot be understood outside the context of the transformation that occurred with the classical concepts of political philosophy that developed in the early Modern period – the concepts of the people and the multitude, as well as the concepts of power and political governance that follow from this. Therefore, the very fact of the reactualization of the concept of multitude in the latest discourses of contemporary political philosophy (Negri, Hardt, Virno) can be explained only within the framework of a historical and philosophical approach.

2. Referring to the works of Machiavelli, Spinoza and Hobbes allows us to consider the theme of the people and the multitude as two fundamental variants of the conceptualization of political reality, appealing to different modes of political existence. In Machiavelli's political dictionary, thematization of this kind appears as a problem of managing political reality through influencing unorganized

political matter, represented in the image of things and people who are incapable of independent political activity. Hobbes also argues in a similar way and considers the multitude through the prism of the problem of political governance: The Leviathan state regulates the movement of multitudinous autonomous individuals, transforming them into a people through external influence. Spinoza's political teaching inherits the Hobbesian line of political thinking about the multitude, but at the same time, it introduces a number of completely new points. Spinoza partly rejects Hobbes's political vocabulary and underestimates the role of the state. He proceeds from the fact that the affects of the multitude are subject to restraint not through state power, but through self-control, stimulated by the individual's concern for self-preservation. In addition, the state is not excluded, but is limited: its activity is directed to creating more favorable conditions for the implementation of such an individual incentive.

3. The political logic of the masses can be represented as a reinterpretation of the concept of multitude in the 19th and 20th centuries. An important difference between the concept of the masses and the classical doctrine of the multitude is that aspects related to individual behavior come to the fore. The key to understanding the masses in this theoretical framework is to study their internal structure by answering the question which individual psychological mechanisms are involved when the masses manifest themselves. Nevertheless, at a fundamental level, the masses and the multitude refer to the similar issue: the existence of an uncontrolled and chaotic mass as a substance of political reality can pose a political problem. At the same time, as in the classical doctrine of the multitude, the masses are thought of as a negative element of political reality, which is a threat to political stability.

4. The emergence of the concept of multitude in latest political discourse is associated with more reflective attitudes that are aimed at creating a new political doctrine. On the one hand, the works of Negri and Hardt are based on classical philosophy, but on the other hand, they recreate this tradition anew, including new

concepts in their analysis. The concept of multitude arises from a critical study of Spinoza's philosophy, but the authors give it completely different features that meet the modern problems that Hardt and Negri face. The multitude theory arises already in the established discourse of political theory, where this concept will have to compete with other theories. This circumstance determines the development of this concept. The proponents of this theory immediately put the multitude in opposition to other similar concepts, such as class, the masses and people, thereby creating a different ontology of the multitude, which will be based not on historicity, but on the collective plan of immanence, which does not depend on historical events. Therefore, from the very beginning of its return to political discourse, the multitude offers a completely different approach to the interpretation of political reality compared to classical political theory

5. In political theory, there are two completely different and incommensurable approaches to the interpretation of the problems of the multitude. The first approach, which combines the classical interpretation of *multitudo* and the masses theory, can be described as the task of controlling and organizing chaotic and disparate political matter that arises in political reality and can be a destabilizing factor. The contours of the new political subject in latest political discourse are outlined in the form of a certain ensemble of autonomous communities, which interact with each other within the framework of a single counter-hegemonic anti-globalization project. Therefore, the second approach radically reverses the basic concepts of political philosophy, and turns the multitude from matter into an active community, a republic of friends, which has immanent forces and makes it possible to form productive communication without external organization and control.

6. Thus, the topic of multitude in political philosophy is locked between two languages of description, which gives rise to clear dichotomies: control and freedom, organization and spontaneity, movement and action, passive matter and active community. Both approaches are able to grasp significant elements in how

the multitude behaves in political reality, but at the same time they form completely different logics, despite the fact that contemporary multitude theorists (Negri, Hardt, Virno) often refer to classical political philosophies as sources of their ideas.

Theoretical and Practical Outcome of the Study

Dissertation results expand theoretical knowledge about the problem of the multitude, actively discussed by philosophers since late 1980s. Our research demonstrates that the concept of the multitude in its latest interpretation differs significantly from the original political meaning this concept had at the beginning of the Modern era. To clarify this situation, we conceptualize this difference as two distinct doctrines: the classical multitude doctrine and the multitude as a political project. In addition, in the Russian-speaking academic environment, the status of *multitude* as a concept was unclear due to the systematic use of *the masses*. This is noticeable, for example, in the Russian translation of *Empire* by Negri and Hardt. The translator constantly uses the term *masses* to denote *the multitude* of the English version. This raises the question whether these two entities of political reality are identical: Are the masses and the multitude, using a scholastic term, one and the same substance? The theoretical significance of the study lies in the fact that we try, using political philosophy tools, to clarify this confusion.

The dissertation's practical significance consists in the fact that its materials and conclusions can be used in university courses, research seminars and textbooks on various disciplines, such as political philosophy, social philosophy, history of political theory, etc. Proposed ideas may be interesting within a wider educational framework in the humanities, since they deal with a variety of topics from the history of social and political philosophy. The dissertation will introduce readers to the current political-philosophical vocabulary and help them navigate difficult concepts. Furthermore, the study can serve as a theoretical basis for conducting

more practice-oriented research, which will focus on the political role of large crowds of people, the behavior of crowds and the public, political action, etc.

MAIN BODY OF THE DISSERTATION

The **introduction** shows why the discussed problem is relevant and the degree of scientific elaboration of the topic. It also formulates the objective and tasks, defines the subject-matter and object of research, describes the methodological foundations, reveals the scientific novelty and theoretical significance of the work, and formulates the statements submitted for defense. At the end of the introduction, theoretical and practical outcome of the study are formulated.

The first chapter *The Classical Doctrine of the Multitude* is devoted to the study of political thought about the multitude in Early Modern philosophy. **Section 1.1** explores the general problem of the multitude in political philosophy. Today, interest in the concept has emerged thanks to the research of Antonio Negri, Michael Hardt, Paolo Virno and others, but the topic of the multitude itself is not new to political thought. These contemporary authors themselves cite classical political philosophy of the Modern Era as the source of their ideas. Nevertheless, the general picture of thinking about the multitude remains unclear, hence it is not always possible to get a complete and voluminous picture. The first chapter offers a clarification of the classical multitude doctrine. For this we try to explore the meaning of the multitude and its political logic, through an appeal to such authors as Thomas Hobbes, Niccolo Machiavelli, Benedict Spinoza and others.

Section 1.2 sets the foundations for understanding the multitude via the categories of matter and motion. Through the texts of Machiavelli and Guicciardini, one can observe how the basic doctrine of *la moltitudine* is posed as an independent and chaotic matter of political reality that needs governance and good

laws. Without a leader, the multitude is helpless, according to Machiavelli, and its chaotic movement is like a sea wave, adds Guicciardini, which follows the movement of the wind. At the same time, the political matter of the multitude is deprived of stability or order. The political problem of the multitude manifests itself as the need to manage this movement and create a stable order within political communities. The people who make up the multitude can be neither bad nor good in themselves, but for a stable political order good laws are needed that could prevent negative phenomena and develop virtue.

Sections 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5 explore the problem of the multitude in works by Hobbes and Spinoza. For the English philosopher, the multitude is a chaotic matter, the movement of which needs to be regulated by forming a social contract and establishing sovereign power. Spinoza, on the one hand, inherits Hobbes, on the other — opposes him. The origins of the differences between the two approaches to the multitude can be traced in the difference of ontologies related, in particular, to concepts of motion, matter and body. These sections also explore the relationship between the multitude and the state. The Hobbesian construction of sovereignty is interpreted as a means designed to solve the problem of the multitude, giving it a monolithic form of the people. In Spinoza's ontology, the organization of matter from the outside is impossible. Relying on the concept of power and the affect theory to explain the dynamics of the multitude, he formulates the idea of the dual, simultaneously destructive and creative nature of this concept.

The final section of the first chapter offers a general perspective on the political logic of the multitude in Early Modern political philosophy. Based on the analysis, we can conclude that the classical doctrine represents the multitude not as a political subject, but as the primary way of existence of a large population of people in political reality. The multitude can be represented as a chaotic matter of political reality, it is certainly a political problem, a task of real politics. To cope with this, the multitude should be transformed into a people, as Hobbes believes, or create optimal laws and a good order to develop virtue, as Machiavelli sees this

problem. Spinoza identifies the multitude as the basis of a political community, recognizing the power of the multitude (*potentia multitudinis*), but at the same time, from the very first pages of the Treatise, he states that the multitude should be controlled and restrained within the boundaries of adequate behavior, recognizing that *security* is an important virtue for the state.

The second chapter *The political logic of the masses* faces the following research task: the dominance of the concept of *the masses* in sociological and philosophical vocabulary of the 19th-20th centuries raises a natural question in the context of our dissertation about the relationship between the concepts *the masses* or *crowd* and *the multitude*. Either they are entities of the same order or, as Negri and Hardt continuously repeat, the multitude is not equal to the masses: these are different political entities. Researchers such as William Mazzarella offer a historical solution to this problem: the masses are a phenomenon of the Industrial Revolution era, when huge crowds of people filled cities with their presence, which prompted contemporaries to talk about the “age of the crowd” or the arrival of the “mass man”. A multitude is also a collection of people, but living in a different, digital era and having a completely different access and understanding of political reality. Stefan Johnson draws a direct connection between the emergence of the concept of the masses and the political need to represent large concentrations of people in political reality. Nevertheless, there remains a philosophical lack of clarity as to why the multitude is again replacing the masses, and how do these concepts relate? In this chapter, we will analyze the problems of the masses in the context of the general history of the concept *multitudo* in political philosophy.

Section 2.1 *Masses and fear* examine the foundation of mass perception through the eyes of various theorists. During the analysis, we found out that at a fundamental level, the theory of the masses develops similar problems as the classical doctrine of the multitude, while expanding the scope and number of topics that are developed within the framework of the masses. Fear is one of the main emotional states considering the idea of the masses. This fear is caused not only by

the possible problem of encountering huge crowds of people, but also by the awareness of the spiritual and cultural crisis that is associated with global changes in the society's political structure. The arrival of the mass man heralds a new era, when traditional political institutions of Europe of the 19th and 20th centuries are tested for strength and stability.

The political logic of the masses further sharpens the difference between the elites and the rest, who make up the majority, which is expressed through the manifestation of large concentrations of people in political reality. Many who make up the masses are not the people. Political representation does not always work for them, they are subject to affects and dominated by the Unconscious. The status of an individual can be changed in terms of his or her rational behavior (outside the masses, as Le Bon is convinced, the individual has more rational features). The masses cannot act rationally without proper organization, the structure of its psychology is tied to the figure of the leader, the primal father (Freud), so the necessity of controlling and organizing the masses comes to the fore.

In section 2.2, we turn our attention to various opposites of mass perception that can be found in the history of political and social thought of the 19th and 20th centuries. Undoubtedly, the negative vision of the masses prevails, it generates fear and anxiety of a cultural crisis which marks their arrival. Nevertheless, traditionally, Marxism has a more positive attitude to the changes that mass society brings with it: there is a revolutionary potential that can be used. In *Basic Concepts in History*³¹, such duality is called the ambivalence of the masses, and in this section we have tried to explicate this logic, based on Arendt's ideas, who has an extremely negative attitude to the possibilities of mass society and Marxism. The latter, on the contrary, sees in the masses the substance for revolutionary transformation. The question that interested us was the following: to what extent is the ambivalence of the masses, i.e. the difference in its perception and capabilities,

31 Werner, Gschnitzer, Kozellek, Schoeneman 2014.

radically able to change the main problem of the masses? One can have a negative attitude towards the masses, fear them, or associate their essence with totalitarian movements, or vice versa, have a positive attitude to its mobilization capabilities, see in it the potential for a positive transformation of political reality (which we have considered in Marxist theory of Plekhanov, Lenin and Gramsci) – in these two logics, the central problem remains the same: the masses must be managed, trained, controlled and limited in their movement. It is in this sense that the concept of the masses functions in the 19th and 20th century political vocabulary. Marxist and liberal authors think of the masses in terms of formless matter, which can expand and absorb various spheres. It can be an element of a political crisis, but this matter does not independently turn into a self-aware subject of political reality. Lenin, for example, implements the vanguard party theory, whose leading role could help to organize the masses. In addition, Gramsci's theory of hegemony has the same ideas, but in a more developed stage.

Section 2.3 *The threshold of mass ambivalence: the silent majority* focuses on a different interpretation of the possible ambivalence of the masses, which is expressed in the idea of the masses as a silent majority, proposed by Baudrillard. The very expression “silent majority” is a vivid political symbol, it can mean the hidden potential of the masses, their spontaneity and unpredictability. The political logic of the masses appears as an element of an elusive order. On the one hand, all kinds of methods of political analysis try to find out the will and desires of the masses, their choices and preferences. On the other hand, this construction itself looks very fragile and does not always correspond to reality. Baudrillard showed that the mass, it turns out, has turned into a majority, devoid of voice and meaning, resisting the social and the imposition of clear categories. The mass is not the middle class, not the working class and not the bourgeoisie, these old categories ceasing to adequately describe reality. It is easy to face the problem of manipulation here. Baudrillard showed that direct communication with the masses is almost impossible, as they do not provide any signals. Therefore, practices like spells and rituals that are aimed at an elusive object come into play. The resulting

product can be presented in the form of an imposed opinion or an ideological construct. His work most clearly demonstrates the conceptual impossibility of representing the masses as a meaningful political subject, and brings it closer to the silent matter of political reality, communication and any interaction with which is difficult and will never reach completeness: the masses retain spontaneity and unpredictability.

In section 2.4 *Mass as a matter of political reality*, we tried to find other theoretical confirmations of the connections that are found between the logic of the masses and the multitude. The theory proposed by Canetti gives a more detailed idea of the masses as a matter or substance of political reality. If Le Bon is rightfully considered the founder of the mass social psychology, then Canetti's phenomenology of the masses takes a step forward. Here the problem of the masses is freed from its old shackles associated with the idea of their immutable barbarism. Like Le Bon, however, Canetti traces the genesis of the masses from the natural state characteristic of the animal kingdom. Canetti speaks of the *pack* as a phenomenon associated with the formation of clusters of people, but not yet having all the main properties of the masses, which we have already mentioned. Unlike Le Bon and other mass theorists, Canetti sees in the masses something more than just a large crowd of people entering the arena of history. The masses are a symbol that finds itself in various cultures, religions and phenomena of society.

The final section of the second chapter 2.5 *Boundaries of the masses: between spontaneity and management* offers a general review of conceptualizing the masses within the historical framework of the concept *multitudo*. Spontaneity is the initial ontological feature of the masses. It conveys the idea of unpredictability, emotionality, irrationality, and a propensity for direct action. The spontaneity of the masses makes its existence impossible without a leader figure who can replace spontaneity into control and direction. In addition, spontaneity is connected with the problem of power, namely, spontaneous order is not stable, and it cannot

guarantee long-lasting power institutions, but at the same time retains energy, or *potentia*, as Spinoza would put it. The political theory of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century offers a very clear solution to the problem of spontaneity. The unpredictability of spontaneity must be translated into the register of clear and meaningful management. The management and control of the masses will allow it to overcome spontaneity and at the same time use energy resources that it possesses with advantage. But even in this case, the masses can be dangerous if they fall for totalitarian propaganda. Then a society dominated by the masses, gripped by a totalitarian movement, can undergo a dramatic political experience of repression and violence.

In the third chapter of our study *The contemporary doctrine of the multitude*, we begin to look at the structure of the multitude theory, which has been developed since the late 1980s, and received a number of significant publications already in the 21st century. Such texts include joint books Negri and Hardt books *Empire* and *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*, a book by Paolo Virno *The Grammar of the Multitude* and a number of others. In this part of the dissertation, it is shown how the concept of multitude is established as a new political doctrine in latest philosophical discourse.

Section 3.1 *Spinozist origins of the new doctrine of the multitude* addresses the origins of the modern multitude theory in Antonio Negri. It is shown how the initial design of the multitude in political theory is built on the basis of the conceptual foundation that is laid when interpreting Spinoza as a “wild anomaly” (according to Negri's book of the same name: *L'anomalia selvaggia: Spinoza sovversivo. Democrazia ed eternità in Spinoza*) in relation to the philosophical tradition of the 17th century. In the works of Vittorio Morfino and Michael Goddard, we found a detailed analysis of this rediscovery of the *multitude* concept as an essential part of Spinoza's philosophical heritage³². The Dutch thinker, in this case,

32 CM.: Goddard M. From the Multitudo to the Multitude: The Place of Spinoza in the Political Philosophy of Antonio Negri // Reading Negri: Marxism in the Age of Empire, ed. By Pierre Lamarche, Max Rosenkrantz, David Sherman, Chicago: Open court press, 2011., Morfino V. The Multitudo

is not just a predecessor of Marx. Spinoza's philosophy is read as the basis for a materialistic ontology of immanence. Our research has shown that the key point in the interpretation of Negri is to read the multitude as a subject of constituent power.

The power of the multitude (*multitudinis potentia*) is not just a political indicator of strength, but also the legal basis of power, within the framework of Spinoza's political philosophy. The Negri turns to this position as the central one and draws further conclusions from this. Conceptualizing the differences between the concepts of *potentia* and *potestas* allowed us to separate the multitude and the people. In contrast to the people as an element of *potestas*, it is political power that mediates relations between people, introducing the principle of transcendence in the form of representation and the figure of the sovereign. The multitude with its collective power-*potentia* embodies a collective plan of immanence that resists representation, that is, the subject of constituent power that does not need it. Since the multitude is a subject of the constituent power and as such is directly connected with the emergence of a political body, it should continue to play an active role in political life.

Section 3.2. *From Spinozism to Marxism* outlines more clearly how the new doctrine of the multitude develops and what forms it takes. We have analyzed the class component of multitude theory. The new understanding of the class, which is proposed by Hardt and Negri, significantly breaks with the traditional idea of the class as an antagonism of two subjects (Knott). The class nature of the multitude actually turns into the logic of an infinite subject, this is not a confrontation between two large associations, but the potential possibility of the inclusion of any identity in a common infinite community. The political philosophy of the multitude is a project that is, as it were, open to the future. It describes a reality whose signs are being read now, but have not yet been fully realized. The project of the multitude seems to be a deed not yet accomplished (*fait à accomplir*).

Sections 3.3 and 3.4 set the foundations for the interpretation of the contemporary doctrine of the multitude as a republic of friends. From chaotic and passive matter, helpless (*inutile*) without a leader, as Machiavelli said, *multitudo* acquires the features of an active subject, not unified, but preserving community. Community opposes closeness and the building of clear hierarchies. Political friendship opens up a space of open communication based on recognition and respect. When we talk about the multitude, at first glance, it is difficult to imagine constantly reproducing personal ties of friendship, but here we can turn to the opposition of friendship and love. Arendt very accurately builds a distinction between the two forms of interpersonal ties, placing friendship in a public space. Political friendship means a space of community, in which full-fledged intimacy is not necessarily realized, but respect and recognition of community are one of the main criteria of political friendship. Friendship does not imply the assertion of such a community, which leads to complete homogeneity and absence of differences on the one hand, and too strong inequality threatening to turn into dependence and subordination, on the other. Political friendship based on community avoids these extremes.

The concept of the common is a central element for justifying the possibility of the multitude as an autonomous community. We can say that everything that connects people to each other is common. The common is a product of social cooperation: language, emotions, codes, meanings, and even material things. In addition, both the natural conditions and the resources in which a person lives are considered to be the common. The problem of the common lies in the fact that capitalism appropriates the “common” to its service, thereby alienating the common from the multitude. This category is designed to overcome the dichotomy of the public and the private: within the framework of the political project of the multitude, it is important to take into account common abilities, common work and common intellect. The logic of the common, of course, resembles the idea of communism. It also has revolutionary potential.

However, the problems of the common have their own paradoxes, and **section 3.5** analyzes one of them. The concept of immaterial labor is of great interest here. For Virno, immaterial labor is revealed as an anthropological problem. Virno fully accepts the thesis that human is a political being and adds that politics can be found in the very process of labor. Work under modern capitalism acquires the features of political action, and this is due to the fact that virtuosity can be called the defining quality of work. Basically, Virno would like to put virtuosity in a political context. In a post-industrial society, a factory worker's labor is not always reduced only to the process of producing goods. The worker is in constant communication with others.

Non-material labor emphasizes increase in the importance of an employee's subjective aspect, i.e. his personal qualities in production. By producing a cultural product, he creates a special area of consumption, influencing the dynamics of markets and various industries. The virtuosity of labor emphasizes potential political nature of the labor process, and the working multitude acts as a political subject. If labor itself is no longer represented, at least in theory, as a process that is mainly determined by its result, but resembles, as Virno writes, “activity without finished work”, then what can be alienated in this case, how will capitalism work in its exploitative function in relation to human labor? In this process, a high degree of alienation may manifest itself. Non-material labor requires a person to become a subject of communication and act as a *virtuoso*. Authoritarian imposition of a certain type of communication turns a person into an object of control, and causes the need to construct an external, and one can say, *repressive virtuosity*. Repressive virtuosity means the potential possibility of turning virtuosity from the free use of forces and abilities into a tool for alienating personal qualities and characteristics of an individual. In other words, repressive virtuosity forces a person to create and apply these qualities, this demand coming from the other. Becoming a subject of communication creates an imperative to use one's abilities. Virtuosity turns into the organizational control over an individual's behavior.

Section 3.6 *The multitude as defectors and the tactics of exodus* thematizes the possibility of political action of the multitude within the Empire. The multitude as a political community of friends is sometimes described as a community of barbarians and apostates, but such a stigma has a positive connotation. The action of the multitude will be aimed at acquiring the right to free movement within the Empire, and at mastering its own movement, during which the multitude would be able to independently pursue its own ways.

What kind of action can the multitude implement? Here we compare two types of strategy for political struggle in the Marxist tradition: Gramscian and the tactics of the multitude proposed by Negri, Hardt and Virno. The tactics of political struggle as an Exodus differs significantly from the Gramscian approach of positional warfare as the establishment of hegemony. Because instead of winning and achieving leadership, covering the entire network of trenches that surround the state, Virno and other theorists suggest leaving these trenches and not obeying the orders of their commanders. Therefore, the community of friends resembles a community of defectors who want to form their own autonomous community. This is a step towards *non-representativeness*, a radical democracy of irregular systems and a public space based on general intelligence. The republic of the multitude is to consist of councils, leagues, guilds, all that Hobbes called irregular systems. The political action of the multitude is realized in opposition to the official political scene. It uses the resources and opportunities to establish a republic of friends as a community of apostates, “barbarians” and exiles.

The final section of the third chapter, *The political problem of the multitude: The path from Spinoza to Marx*, offers a general historical and philosophical perspective on the transformation of the multitude as a political doctrine. The trajectory of the concept of multitude is understood as a path from Spinoza to Marxism. Antonio Negri turns to the legacy of the Dutch philosopher to see in it the possibilities for a new materialistic philosophy, in which, according to

Morfino, “the disarticulation of ontology and history”³³ takes place. This phrase hides the idea of anti-historicity of the multitude. Going back to the old concept of *multitudo* is meant to find a stable and active element in political life, to which we can turn by saying: “we” are a multitude, “we” always exist as a significant element of political reality. In other words, for Negri, when he begins to write about Spinoza, the multitude is not a product of History, but an integral part of political reality. The collective power of the multitude is being rediscovered, but this time as a positive element of politics.

As part of our study of the history of the concept *multitudo* in political philosophy, we can propose a conceptualization of the contemporary doctrine of the multitude as a political community of friends. The multitude, at the most basic level, appears as an opposition of “we and others”, by “other” we mean the abstract “Empire” as the main source of power. The theoretical development of the doctrine of the multitude tried to demonstrate that “we”, the multitude, also have power, and it cannot be taken away by “others”. The multitude is an inclusive concept, and instead of distinguishing between the public and the private, it offers a theory of the general, which implies common abilities, resources, language, intelligence and other relationships that arise in a community of friends. Political friendship embodies connections that are created within the community, allowing an infinite number of identities to realize themselves in common aspirations.

In the conclusion of the dissertation, the main thesis and final results are formulated.

At this stage in the history of the concept *multitudo*, we have two different political theories. In classical political philosophy (Machiavelli, Hobbes, Spinoza), the multitude is presented as a chaotic matter of political reality. It doesn't act as a political agent, but “moves”, and its movement must be controlled with the help of state power institutions or other similar tools. The concept *masses* is a reinterpretation of this sense of multitude, which adds a number of new meanings,

33 Morfino 2014: 231.

placing the masses in the historical context of the arrival of new social groups and the crisis of culture. The modern doctrine of the multitude, in fact, radically turns the tides. Instead of self-moving political matter that needs a leader and organization, the multitude acquires ontological features that immediately demonstrate to us the possibility for an autonomous political community – a republic of friends.

The two approaches to the problem of multitude that we have studied possess their own strengths and weaknesses, which should be taken into account when studying the multitude theory. The first approach restricts the subjectivity of the multitude, seeing in it only a dangerous element that needs to be weakened, tamed and controlled. In the case of the masses, the problems of education and overcoming the cultural crisis of the “era of barbarism” are added to this. Gramsci offers his strategy of hegemony, which states the need to increase moral and educational level of the masses so that they can be included in the process of establishing state hegemony. The second approach takes the opposite position, relying entirely on the immanent forces of the multitude, which will be able to create a community, a republic of friends without a vertical organization of power.

Within the framework of this approach, the multitude turns into a completely autonomous political entity that embodies all the trends in the development of cognitive capitalism. At this point, multitude theorists see in the multitude the same tool, a product of capitalism that can overcome it. Moreover, the multitude becomes an infinite political subject, since it strives to be as open and inclusive as possible. The infinite subject resembles rather the process of infinite subjectivation: the constant becoming a subject, the interweaving of various identities and temporalities. Therefore, another key weak point of the contemporary doctrine of the multitude is this utopianism which was called *metapolitics* in Rancière`s review. The doctrine of multitude suggests *a-locality* of infinite subjectivities, which blur all boundaries, leaving only the space for their boundless community.

The study of political logic of the multitude should take into account the two approaches we have identified with connection to the problem of the multitude, and build ways to overcome these difficulties. It can be achieved through balancing the two approaches, when the multitude, as a large and disparate number of people, is both considered via the logic of the matter of political reality, which must be controlled, and at the same time as a community that can self-regulate on the basis of internal principles. The immanence of multitude is an essential feature, but it should be combined with the possibility of external and internal control since the power of immanence requires a more complex structure and order.

Author's publications on the topic of the dissertation

The works published by the author in journals indexed in international databases of indexing and citation, as well as on the list of high-level journals of HSE:

1. Tretiak A. (2020) Class project of multitude // *Politeia*, No. 4. pp. 35-52. (In Russ).
2. Tretiak A. and N.Tinus. (2019) Political Logic of “Multitudo” in the Works of Hobbes and Spinoza // *Politeia*, no. 4 (95): 6—24. (In Russ.)
3. Tretiak A. (2018) The Life of the Work: Virno's Reception of Arendt's Political Theory // *Russian Sociological Review*. Vol. 17. No. 4. P. 158-174.

Other publications on the topic of the dissertation:

4. Tretiak A. (2018) Language as praxis: towards the theory of speech act by Paolo Virno // *Izvestia. Ural Federal University Journal. Series 3: Social Sciences*. Vol. 13. No. 3. pp. 118-123. (In Russ).
5. Tretiak A. (2016) Ilyenkov and Althusser: The dispute about the Hegelian heritage // *Philosophy of E. V. Ilyenkov and Modernity: materials of the XVIII International Scientific Conference*, ed. Editor A.D. Maidansky, Belgorod: Izdat. Belgorod State University. (In Russ).