MACHIAVELLIANISM AND "MACHIAVELLIAN PERSON" AS AN OBJECT OF STUDY OF CONTEMPORARY PSYCHOLOGY

MACHIAVELISMUL ȘI „PERSOANA MACHIAVELICĂ" CA OBIECT DE STUDIU AL PSIHOLOGIEI CONTEMPORANE

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În societatea contemporană, caracterizată de crize și instabilitate, știința psihologică se confruntă cu o serie de provocări legate de perspectivele de evoluție ulterioară a societății. Alegerea în favoarea unei sau altei strategii de evoluție depinde în mare măsură de viziunile despre lume, scenariile personale, precum și de valorile morale și spirituale ale indivizilor. În literatura de specialitate se constată interpretări contradictorii cu referire la fenomenul machiavelismului. Pe de o parte, machiavelismul este văzut ca o trăsătură de personalitate ce asigură succesul adaptării psihosociale, pe de altă parte – ca una dintre cauzele ce provoacă disfuncții sociale. În definirea noțiunii de „persoană machiavelică", una dintre caracteristicile de bază este tocmai tendința de manipulare a persoanei. De aici reiese că noțiunile „persoană machiavelică" și „manipulare" practic ar fi similare. Totuși, noțiunea de „machiavelism" se referă la o arie mai largă de semnificație. „Machiavelismul" este un fenomen istoric ce exprimă manifestările lumii exterioare, pe când „persoana machiavelică", ca o manifestare a „omuleţului din noi înşine", reflectă lumea noastră interioară.

Cuvinte-cheie: *machiavelism, personalitate machiavelică, direcţii sociopsihologice, aspecte clinic-psihologice şi evolutive în studiul machiavelismului.*

Highlighting the intra- and interpersonal components inevitably leads to the idea that Machiavellianism, as a psychological phenomenon, cannot be analyzed in depth if only the «Machiavellian personality» is taken into account. The study of Machiavellianism is connected with the fundamental problem of the psychology of everyday life – understanding, i.e. the formation of meanings that express the value relation of the subject to the surrounding world. Deep reflection on social, interpersonal and intrapersonal issues gives the individual the opportunity to find possible ways for his development. In order to carry out the research - identifying the psychosocial limits of the phenomenon

of human manipulation as a starting point in the elaboration of the conception regarding the formation of social values and meanings, of a kind of value-semantic immunity of the subject in the confrontation with manipulation technologies, a complex set of actions is proposed, intended for all actors of the educational process.

In specialized literature, there are contradictory interpretations with reference to the phenomenon of Machiavellianism. On the one hand, *Machiavellianism is seen as a personality trait, which ensures the success of psychosocial adaptation, on the other – as one of the causes that cause social dysfunctions.* The results of empirical studies demonstrate that Machiavellian tendencies are activated in situations of stress and instability, giving individuals the possibility to face such situations. Other research considers that individuals with a high level of Machiavellianism can be characterized by volitional capacities, initiative and skills in manipulating social relations [1,2] and others. At the same time, an accentuated Machiavellianism can lead to mental disorders. Some researches have come to the conclusion that accentuated Machiavellian tendencies are found in people with mental personality disorders [3,4] et al. We believe that these perspectives can be unified as an evolutionarily stable strategy of social behavior.

The analysis of defensive mechanisms shows that these mechanisms are triggered precisely in situations when the Machiavellian person forces others to do what he wants, without taking into account the needs of the communication partner. These mechanisms represent a combination of simple, primitive, “narcissistic” (denial) and neurotic (reactivity) reactions. Only in some cases is a more complex cognitive defense mechanism (compensation) used [5]. It was highlighted that the evaluations on the MAC Scale negatively correlate with general indices of self-actualization, including on separate subscales: flexibility in communication, sociability, vision of human nature, self-sympathy, autonomy and individual values. As the level of Machiavellianism increases, the level of self-actualization, reflexivity and self-awareness decreases. What is specific to the self-actualizing/tendency person, namely, the ability to distinguish between “ends” and “means”, does not characterize Machiavellians, they are only means-oriented, at the expense of values [6].

The analysis of modern theories with reference to Machiavellianism, characterized by a diversity of approaches and points of view, shows that one of the ways to integrate them would be to develop a theory based on a two-level structure in the presentation of the phenomenon, which would reflect the positions contradictory. At the first level, the mental and behavioral characteristics specific to the Machiavellian (self-image, self-awareness) will be described. The second level will reflect the representations about others, about oneself, about the world in general (mental maps), therefore, psychosocial phenomena will be described, including the representation about “good” and “bad”, about “truth” and “ false”, the representation of moral norms in different social and activity spheres, the differences between the perception of moral norms at the individual and social level, etc. All this calls into question the thesis of Machiavellianism as a homogeneous category.

There is still another important problem – defining the interpersonal component of Machiavellian behavior in empirical studies. Our conclusion is that Machiavellianism, as a psychological phenomenon, cannot be fully analyzed if only the Machiavellian personality is considered. Machiavelli also analyzes the role of destiny in the history of an individual and the responsibility of the prince in making decisions at crucial moments for the destiny of a country. From this point of view, in Machiavelli's works we identify both the description of the individual with behavioral deviations and the one within the limits of normality. However, in psychological studies at the current stage, priority is given to the research direction of the phenomenon only through the lens of personality with manipulative tendencies, therefore as an antisocial phenomenon.

The existence of these two research directions in the study of Machiavellianism is justified, first of all, by the views of the researchers who identified them and who continued to study this phenomenon as a complex and multidimensional phenomenon. Thus, the study of Machiavellianism in the field of psychology reflects precisely this representation regarding the duality of the human being. In this way, it is confirmed that Machiavellianism, as a personality trait, can serve as a factor and criterion of psychosocial adaptation. But, the question that arises in this case is: what exactly can be considered a criterion of successful adaptation?

Following the study of the interrelationship between the person's Machiavellian orientation and its behavioral consequences, he found the following:

- Corre showed that Machiavellianism can be related to the general level of social and emotional development of the individual. Along with the cognitive-evaluative component, Machiavellianism includes communicative-value and reflexive-corrective elements, which influence the decisions that the person makes in situations of moral dilemmas. There is a certain undifferentiated tendency of ambivalent feelings directed "for" and "against" one's self. The Machiavellian is aware to a certain extent that his actions are immoral, but he is not always aware of the real reasons that lead him to adopt manipulative tactics in communicating with others.
- Machiavellian people resort to manipulation techniques precisely because they suspect others of hostility, and thus, in critical situations, out of a desire to get ahead of their opponents, they resort to such a way of conduct, characterized by caution and suspicion in relation with the others. It has been proven that the typical social-psychological schemes of a person's motivational sphere are factors that determine the strengthening in the personality structure of this scenario - Machiavellian behavior, and character accents are predictors that give the Machiavellian a necessary "tool" to resort to manipulation as a form of social influence [7].
- It has been found that the Machiavellian tends to achieve the highest possible status in interpersonal relationships. The tendency to resort to manipulation is based on this type of behavioral scenario. He is not a "victim" at the social level, but he can play this role because it gives him the opportunity to use external resources to hide his internal problems [5].

- The attempt to identify the conditions that lead to the formation of scenarios of manipulative behavior in relation to others demonstrated that the level of psychological maturity and assertiveness are personal resources that represent basic foundations for the formation of an "anti-Machiavellian" personality, contributing to the development of the feeling of reflection on one's own self, of the correct understanding of self-respect and the tendency to maintain a respect for one's own person [6].

So, the Machiavellians are guided by various implicit and explicit theories regarding the human psyche, intelligence and morality that are the basis of manipulation, therefore certain differences are found between them. From the perspective of hedonistic experiences, the individual ignores, distorts and challenges actual reality, creating the illusion of satisfaction in relation to this reality. In this way, he is in the childish position of the "victim" who actually rejects reality. The manipulator adapts to reality, simplifying things. The reality in which the player (a modern version of the Machiavellian) operates is much more complex than that of the victim, but the strategies of action are just as destructive, because he believes that "any means are effective to achieve ends". A creative approach to everyday reality allows the individual characterized by a certain level of psychological maturity, unlike the modern versions of the Machiavellian, the manipulator, the cynic, the liar and the egoist, not only to live, but also to translate this new reality into projects and actions . The Machiavellian leader has a complex worldview and is capable, if necessary, of implementing a constructive manipulative mode of conduct.

General conclusion: Machiavellian research can be divided into three categories: cognitivist, humanist, and applied.

Cognitivist research investigates the implications of cognitive processes related to "Machiavellianism" as a psychic object, in which concepts and categories corresponding to cognitive processes can be found, respectively what are the legalities in the functioning of this phenomenon as Machiavellianism.

Humanistic research (ideographic approach) is oriented towards the inner world of the individual (values, beliefs and meaning of life) and aims to study the ethical and normative aspects of the work "Principles" and Machiavelli's doctrines in general, including the interpretations of the work that they give different authors and their impact on the current society, but also the self-reflections that the "Machiavellian person" makes on what happens to himself.

Applied research aims to study Machiavellianism in order to reorganize interpersonal relationships. The purpose of these researches is to identify the most effective working tools that can be used in various practical activities aimed at the problem of Machiavellianism (security mechanisms against manipulation, the formation of a mature and integral personality, able to oppose manipulation, games with oneself and self-delusion).

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