УДК 811

CORPORATIST INSTITUTIONS AS A PATH TO BUILDING A SOCIALLY-ORIENTED ECONOMY

Н. А. ЖОЛОБОВ
Научный руководитель Н. М. САВЧЕНКО, канд. ист. наук, доц.
Белорусско-Российский университет
Могилев, Беларусь

The socio-economic reality of the digital era is increasingly marked by labour market instability, unemployment, overwork, atomization, and a loss of self-dignity in many advanced economies. In this context, Patrick Deneen, author of Why Liberalism Failed, argues that liberalism has failed because it treats humans as self-interested individuals rather than social beings seeking belonging and connection. Despite technological progress and material prosperity, many people still feel their lives lack meaning. Studies also show that long-term unemployment can cause psychological harm. At the same time, state-socialist alternatives are often criticized for limiting individual autonomy and encouraging social conflict. These shortcomings suggest the need for a framework balancing individual dignity with social cohesion.

In the late nineteenth century, French politician René de La Tour du Pin proposed corporatism as a response to the social problems caused by rapid liberalization. He argued that intermediate bodies similar to medieval guilds should bridge the gap between the individual and the state, creating solidarity between employers and workers within the same profession. Unlike Karl Marx, who viewed labour relations as class warfare, La Tour du Pin believed cooperation and mutual understanding were possible.

Modern sociological perspectives provide useful insights. In his essays, Göran Therborn argues that collaborative socio-economic order can emerge either through institutionalized partnership, as in Austria, or through institutionalized conflict, as in the Nordic countries and the Netherlands. In the latter model, labour and capital are organized democratically and treated as autonomous labour-market actors.

Austria's corporatist model relies on a "dual system" of labour representation through trade unions and works councils. Trade unions negotiate sector-wide collective agreements, while works councils represent workers at the enterprise level. Although unions retain the right to strike, works councils mainly mediate between employees and management.

Critics question corporatism's effectiveness. Lithuanian economists Vytautas Kuokštis and Simonas Algirdas Spurga note that highly coordinated economies do not always outperform less coordinated ones. Countries such as Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Malta have achieved strong growth despite lower coordination levels.

In conclusion, corporatist institutions may help create a more collaborative economy without abandoning the benefits of the market system. Even if not fully implemented, corporatist ideas remain relevant as a reference point for reforms aimed at improving social and economic policy.